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VOL. 3165.

AN ESCAPE FROM THE TOWER.

BY

EMMA MARSHALL.

IN ONE VOLUME.

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(Continued on page 3 of cover.)

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AN ESCAPE FROM THE TOWER

A STORY
OF THE JACOBITE RISING OF 1715

BY

EMMA MARSHALL,

AUTHOR OF

“THE WHITE KING’S DAUGHTER,” “KENSINGTON PALACE,”
“THE MASTER OF THE MUSICIANS,” ETC.

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1896.



PREFACE.

THE history of Winifrede, Countess of Nithdale, is taken from several authentic sources.

In 1835, Lady Dacre published a book entitled, *Tales of the Peerage and the Peasantry*, from which some details of Lady Nithsdale's journeys to and from Scotland are collected.

A letter addressed by this heroic woman to her sister, the Countess of Traquair, gives a full account of the rescue from the Tower and of the difficulties and dangers which she encountered in those journeys, attended by her faithful servants Walter Elliot and Amy Evans. This letter was first published in the *Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. i. Before its publication little was known of the manner of the Earl's escape.

As this story ends with Lady Nithsdale's arrival in Rome, it may be as well to say that many years

of happiness, with the husband whose life she saved, were granted her.

The Earl died at Rome in 1744. She survived him five years, and had the satisfaction of knowing that her perilous journey to Terreagles, in the spring of 1716, was crowned with success.

By rescuing the family documents, which she had buried for safety in the winter of 1715, she secured a competence to her son.

He married his cousin, Lady Catherine Stewart, a daughter of the Earl of Traquair. Lady Nithsdale's daughter, Lady Anne Maxwell, married Lord Bellew.

WOODSIDE, LEIGH WOODS,

CLIFTON, *March* 1896.

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BOOK I.

An honest man, sir, is able to speak for himself,
when a knave is not.—SHAKESPEARE.

Henry the Fourth (Part II).

BOOK I

The first part of the book is devoted to the study of the history of the world, from the beginning of time to the present day. It is divided into three parts: the first part deals with the history of the world from the beginning of time to the present day; the second part deals with the history of the world from the present day to the future; and the third part deals with the history of the world from the future to the end of time.

AN ESCAPE FROM THE TOWER.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

RESCUE.

1714.—THE brisk wind of a bright September day was sweeping over the broad waters of the Thames, and sending them in little eddies against the piers of Old London Bridge.

The signs above the shops built upon it were swinging in the breeze, and making a monotonous creaking as they moved to and fro.

“The Three Bibles,” painted in strong relief, looked as if they were not to be affected by every passing wind that blew, while “The Angel,” with outspread wings and a brilliant blue garment, displaying at the hem a foot much too large for such

an airy figure, seemed, on the contrary, to be answering the swing of the board on which she was painted, and to be fluttering in the air.

"The Looking-Glass," her next-door neighbour, was so old and faded that very little of the original design remained, and was considered by many people as a disgrace to the owner of the shop below, who, besides being a scrivener and second-hand bookseller, dealt in a variety of goods of so heterogeneous a character that it would be difficult to enumerate them.

He was standing at his door below the sign of "The Looking-Glass," looking down the thoroughfare of the bridge, which was like a narrow street, and more than usually thronged with people.

Michael Paston was chary of words, and although his curiosity was aroused to know what all his neighbours were talking about, he stood erect, leaning against his door, with a cynical smile on his thin lips, which were tightly closed.

Presently the news came to his ears, whether he was willing to hear it or not.

"The King is landing at Greenwich, Master Paston; it is a great event and you stand there like a post, as if you were deaf and blind and dumb!"

"Which King?" Michael Paston asked. "Your

tongue runs so fast, Mistress Chenery, I can scarce understand what you are driving at. I ask again, which King?"

"Why, His Majesty King George the First! Who else should it be?"

"Who else? Ay, you may well ask. I know no King but James, the lawful governor of this realm. Hold your peace, I pray you," as a rush of idle young men came up crying,—

"Long live King George the First! Down with the Papists!"

"Hold your peace, you young fools," Michael repeated.

And now another voice was heard coming from the dark recesses of the little shop, which made a background to the stately figure of its master as he stood there in a long, loose garment of faded mulberry cloth, with a girdle of twisted gold thread, and, upon his head, a black velvet skullcap with an embroidered edge of crimson braid.

"What is amiss, father? What is Mistress Chenery saying? What is the news?"

"Evil news, child, evil news. The usurper is at hand, and his feet have touched English soil. I will hear none of it!" and so saying, though the hours of

business were scarcely over, Michael Paston retired into his shop and shut the door on all intruders.

Christian put her hand into her father's, saying,—

“The news may be false, father; so many lies fly abroad.”

“Ay, child, that is so, but I deem this news is but too true. Hark! how they are huzzaing, the fools—the empty-headed fools!—”

The apprentice, Jack Barnby, got down from his high stool at a desk as his master called him by name.

“Jack, put up the shutters and close the shop. Shut out the daylight, as befits those who have reason to mourn for the sins of a nation. Dost hear, lad? Do not delay, and employ your evening with sorting the books which I bought at the sale, and jotting down their titles and authors, in the folio. Harkee, Jack Barnby; you keep the house this evening—no chattering and chaffering about matters of which you know naught with the foolish folk on the bridge. Dost hear?”

“Yes, master, I hear,” Jack said, making a grimace, which Christian saw.

“It's all one to me who is King and who isn't, so long as I get my bread and ale, and—”

The rest was lost on both father and daughter.

Christian had led her father to the parlour behind

the shop, which looked out eastward on the river. Many barges were coming up with the flood, and lesser craft were curtseying on the little wavelets which, with the rising wind, grew almost to the size of billows as the tide poured through the narrow arches.

"Shall I read, father?" Christian said. "We had just reached the last book of the *Paradise Lost*."

"Nay, child, I am in no mood for John Milton this evening. It is a sign of his genius that I love to hear you read his majestic lines, knowing in my heart as I do that he was a rank traitor."

"Nay, father, that is too hard an epithet."

"Secretary to the usurper, how could he be otherwise? But, forsooth, we have traitors even in our own time to think of; those who are dead and gone can do no mischief."

"Father," Christian said; "there are many good men and true who think it was well for the country that it was delivered from a Popish king."

"Nay, little one," the old man said tenderly; for though harsh and stern in his political views to all beside, he was always gentle to this child of his old age. "Nay, little one! thou canst not discern as I can the truth that lawful rights cannot be set aside, that the God of Justice hates injustice, and that it is

for us poor mortals to leave the issues in His hands, nor set up our judgments to decide what is good for a nation or for people. William of Orange and his wife brought no blessing with them.

“The poor Queen, who has just gone to her account, was visited by keen remorse when, on her death-bed, she remembered she had cheated her innocent brother out of his inheritance. They say she would fain have rendered him justice, and said as much in the intervals of her stupors. What with these bitter memories and the quarrels of those about her, her death-bed was not a peaceful one. Uneasy lies the head which wears a crown, Christian, and may his lie on a thorny pillow who came to-day to land at Greenwich.”

Christian was silent; she was well used to her father's strongly-expressed, Jacobite opinions. She sympathised with them in great measure, but she knew her father was a Protestant at heart, and she knew enough, from the tales of her old friend and faithful servant, Nancy, to make her thank God the religion of her dead mother was now the religion of the country.

As Christian sat on a low stool at her father's side—one hand resting on his knee, the other holding the volume from which she had been about to read

when he had broken out into denunciations of the daughters of the King, who had fled on the stormy waters of the river now rippling below—she made an unconscious picture, on which an artist's eye would love to linger. Christian had hair of the colour of the chestnut, when it catches the sunlight as it lies amongst the yellow leaves which strew the ground. It was not raised high on her head as was the fashion of the time—a fashion set by Queen Mary when she came over from the Hague to Whitehall, a fashion which, like all set by those in exalted places, was not only followed but exaggerated. Christian's hair was parted on her forehead, where a few locks curled under a little velvet snood, and then lay in heavy masses, confined by knots of ribbon, on her shoulders.

Her head was well set on a swan-like throat, and a white kerchief was crossed on the breast of her blue gown, which was made of rich brocade—a length which, a little injured, had been given her from his stores by her father.

There was a dignity and grace in Christian, which, while they attracted many admirers, kept them at a distance, and no man ever ventured to press his suit, if he had once been rejected.

The room in which Christian was sitting with her

father was raised some thirty feet above the river, and below was the basement, which rested upon the arches of the bridge, being some ten feet lower. Here the apprentice had a small chamber under the shop, and Nancy her kitchen and a little room adjoining, facing the river, where Christian would often go to have a chat with her old friend.

Michael Paston had fallen into a dose in his chair, and Christian, closing the book, went softly out of the room to the narrow stairs, which led to the upper storey, where she had her own bed-chamber next her father's. A still narrower flight led down to the basement.

As she closed the sitting-room door, she met, on the little square landing, a figure just coming up the stairs.

The light was very dim, only admitted by a small, square opening in the wall above, scarcely deserving the name of a window.

Christian felt her arm seized, and a merry laugh accompanied the words,—

“Did you think I was a ghost? I tried to get in at the shop, but it was all shut up as if some of you were dead. What’s that for?”

“Awdry, how you startled me! How did you get in?”

"Oh, I had my wits about me, and got down by the steps from "The Looking-Glass," and so along the parapet, and in at old Nan's window below. I have done it scores of times."

"Come up into my room. Don't talk so loud here; my father is asleep."

"Sleeping off his ill-temper," said Awdry Chenery. "He was vastly rude to my mother, and calling folk fools all round an hour ago."

"You know he feels, with thousands of other men, that now the Elector has landed at Greenwich the chances of the restoration of the rightful King are lessened."

"I should hope they were, not that I trouble my head about it. It's no odds to me."

The two girls were in Christian's room by this time, and Awdry Chenery went to the open casement and looked out.

"I wish I had a lattice like this; it would while away many an hour to watch the barges. I can only, by craning my neck, see what goes on below on the bridge. See now, Christian, here are two coming with flags flying and music playing. I'll warrant the people in them have been to Greenwich to shout 'Long live King George.' And what a number of smaller craft. The river is pretty rough, though.

Look how yonder boat is rocking. I wonder if it will avoid the pier. Yes, it's all right. If I were you, Christian, I should sit here all the livelong day."

"I dare to say you would," Christian replied. "I've something else to do."

"Poring over old books, and putting your eyes out with reading stupid, yellow parchments. It makes you old before your time. I hear the folk on the bridge say so. And you ought to be married, Christian; you are getting old. I mean old to my thinking," said the little maiden of scarcely seventeen, to whom, the woman who had passed her twenty-fifth birthday seemed, as she said, old.

"Yes," she continued, leaning out of the casement, "I say it's a shame you aren't married. Why did you frown on Maurice Stockton? He was deep in love with you last Christmas."

"And will be deeper in love with someone else before next Christmas," was the rejoinder. "You talk much folly, child."

"Do I? Well, I dare say you are right. But I love you all the same," Awdry said, nestling close to Christian. "Kiss me, give me a real, good kiss."

Christian put her arms round her little chattering friend, and kissed her again and again.



"Take care, Awdry, you are not caught by flattering words. My dear, men deal in them, and put them in the stead of true feeling. Maurice Stockton, with his finery and grand airs, might tell me till doomsday he loved me, and I should not believe him. Mere babblers like him are like shallow brooks. True love is deep, like yonder river, which flows on with but little noise to meet the ocean. The silent highway, they call it," she went on, "and the sorrowful highway would suit it also. As I look out yonder to the river, I often think of those who have passed along under this very bridge to their doom—that great man on whose works my father is so set—Sir Thomas More—who perished in his prime—coming from his happy home at Chelsea to yon gloomy Tower to die; all through the King, his master's, malice, because, forsooth, he would not go against his conscience."

"I heard our neighbour, Master Bunting, telling my mother that if the Jacobites rise, they'll go by scores to the Tower, and there'll be a pretty row of heads on the bridge gateway."

"Let us pray it may not be so," Christian said. "The very thought makes me shudder."

"Let's be cheerful now, for a change," Awdry said. "My mother's cousin, Mistress Mills, who

lives hard by the Tower, has a grand supper next week. It's the birthday feast of Harry Mills, who has come home safe and sound from a voyage. You are to come along with us, Christian. We can get there quick enough by a boat, and sure you can leave your old daddy for once. Say you will come."

"I will not promise. Now I must think first of my father's supper, for the clock of Saint Mary Overie has chimed six, and he must be awake by this time."

Awdry did not answer; she was watching a small boat rowed by one man towards the bridge.

"Look! look, Christian! See, it is drifting straight for the pier beneath; it will upset; it will be swamped! Yes, yes, it is over. The man is in the water and the boat is drifting away."

Christian gave one look, leaning out of the window by Awdry's side. Then, without a word, she was down the stairs with swift steps, and in another moment in old Nancy's room.

"Quick, Nan, quick, a boat is upset! Call Jack. Get a rope," and opening the window wide, by which Awdry had entered an hour before, she stood on the parapet, and looking down, saw a man struggling in the eddy by the pier immediately

beneath her. He had laid hold of an iron ring which was fixed in the stonework of the pier, but the swirl of the water and the rush of the tide had apparently exhausted him, and catching sight of Christian's figure above him he said,—

“A rope, for Heaven's sake.”

Then Christian's voice rang out in cheering tone,—

“Hold fast, a rope is sent for. Only hold fast. Jack Barnby,” she called, “hasten, I pray you, for the rope.”

“The rope, the rope!” Awdry Chenery cried, wringing her hands. “He will be drowned, he will sink. Oh! Christian, Christian!”

“Peace, child. He will not be drowned,” she answered as Jack Barnby came on the parapet with a coil of rope used to tie up the packages of goods which were sent out from the shop.

“Quick—uncoil it. And you, Awdry and Jack, hold one end, as for dear life,” she said as she prepared to throw the other to the man struggling in the water below.

“Courage!” Christian said, raising her clear, musical voice. “Courage! the rope is made fast.”

“I—I cannot let go of the ring. If I do—”

“You *must* let go—*now!*” and stooping over

the edge of the parapet, Christian threw the rope, and it was caught by one hand, while the man still clung with the other to the iron ring.

"Take the rope with both hands. Do you hear? We can help you up. Do not fear."

It was a moment of suspense, for the swirling water was like a little whirlpool, and the man was evidently exhausted. Blinded with spray, he swayed backwards and forwards, like a feather tossed by the force of the current.

"Hold fast—hold the rope fast, Jack Barnby!" Christian called, "and with all your might pull backwards with Awdry."

At last the rope was grasped with both hands by the struggling man, and all pulled with an effort which was too great a strain on Christian. She fell against Awdry, and for a moment lost her footing; but the man she had saved was drawn up on to the parapet, and lay with his face hidden in his arms, motionless.

"Look out!" Jack Barnby said fiercely. "Look out, master, or you'll be slipping back into the water," and Jack took the young man roughly by one arm and pulled him further up on the parapet.

"I hope you are thankful to Mistress Christian, for she has saved your life, you young fool. You

were no more fit to row a boat than a babe, seems to me. Yes," he shouted to a man in a barge below in answer to a question—"Is the man saved?"—"yes, he is saved."

"That's well, but the boat has drifted up stream and he'll not see it again in a hurry."

All this time the man had not stirred, and old Nancy coming out with a cup of wine, gave the prostrate figure a somewhat vigorous slap.

"Come, what ails you?" she said. "Take a sup of wine, and you shall come in and dry your clothes. They ain't fine ones, that's one comfort; brown homespun will soon be wrung out, and when dried will be none the worse for the ducking, nor you neither. Come, I say."

"He can't move," Christian said; "he must have hit his head against the wall; he is stunned, Nancy."

"Oh," screamed Awdry, "he is dead. I dare not look at him!"

"Let us get him into your room, Nancy. Kindle a good fire, and dry his clothes."

"Why, dear heart, child!" Nancy said, "what ails your hands?"

"The rope cut them a little, but nought to care about."

Then, by the combined efforts of Jack, Nancy and Christian, the rescued man was dragged into Nancy's room, through the window which was within a foot of the parapet, and as they laid him on the hearth he sighed heavily, opened his eyes and sat up.

"What has happened?" he asked, shuddering, and looking round with a dazed, bewildered stare.

"Why, you've had a ducking, my master, and the sooner we dry you the better," was Nancy's reply.

CHAPTER II.

CONFIDENCES.

"FATHER!" Christian said a few minutes later, as she went into her father's room,—“Father, a boat was upset just below our windows, and the man who was in it was hurled by the current against the pier. We threw a rope out to him, and he is in Nancy's room. Shall we not bid him to supper?”

“As you will, my child; but we ought to know somewhat of him, before receiving him into the house.”

“We may be entertaining an angel unawares, father,” Christian said with a laugh. “Not that he looks greatly like an angel. His hair is long, but his surtout is of plain brown cloth, and what his collar may be I could not say, for it is hanging like a rag round his neck. He has a very pleasant voice, and thanks Nancy for what she does for him.”

“Well, well, let him sup to-night, and be quick, child, to make ready, for I am hungry, though a fast

rather than a feast befits the subjects of King James to-day."

Christian busied herself with taking from a corner cupboard a chased silver flagon, and a large china cup, with a few plates of porcelain only used on state occasions. She laid the table in the recess formed by the window, with careful nicety, and then returned to the kitchen to see what dishes Nancy had prepared.

She found the stranger seated in a high-backed chair, with an old cloak of Nancy's round him, and his feet thrust into a pair of very clumsy shoes. His long hair was hanging in tangled masses over his shoulders, and his appearance was enough to excite mingled laughter and compassion.

Awdry was flitting about, thinking she was of use, and Jack Barnby was stirring a hot posset which Nancy had put on the fire, and which was to be administered to the stranger as soon as it was ready.

"By rights, when he has taken this, he ought to be put to bed to sweat, Mistress Christian; but he says he must be off into the city, where he has business."

"Yes, and, forsooth, I am in no fit condition to remain here. I must cut a sorry figure in your eyes,

madam. I see yonder little maiden can scarce hide her merriment!"

The ice thus broken, Awdry burst into a little, rippling laugh, and Christian could not resist joining in it.

"Indeed, sir," she said, "we are glad to see you safe, and, as I trust, unhurt. We feared at first that you had fared badly in our efforts to rescue you."

"You owe your life, young man, to Mistress Christian," cried Nancy. "If we had all screamed and wrung our hands, like yonder little hussy, you'd have been lying at the bottom of the Thames, or drifting along with your boat as dead as a drowned dog, thrown into the water to get rid of him!"

"I am your humble servant, Mistress Christian, for so I think I hear yonder good woman call you, and you may count on my service, if ever I have the luck to be able to render it. It is vain for me to attempt to rise, swathed in these cumbrous garments," he went on, "but were I free from them, I would gladly bend my knee and ask permission to kiss the hand that was stretched out to me in the hour of peril. Methinks my guardian angel took your form for the moment. Believe, I pray you, that

David Llewellyn owes you a debt he can never hope to repay."

"You are kindly welcome, sir, to aught that we did for you. Is it not so, Awdry?"

"I did but little, Christian; it was Barnby that tugged the hardest next to you, and your fingers are cut by the rope; bind them up, Nancy."

"Ay, bind them up indeed, and they need it. The notion of it—see, master, what mischief has been wrought on my young mistress for your salvation."

The young man looked with great concern at the fair white palms which were stretched out at Nancy's bidding to be bathed in warm water.

"And such hands, pretty and useful as they are! why, the old master could not live a day without them, and seems to me they'll have to be swathed for a week at shortest."

"Nonsense, Nancy! there, that will do. The supper must be carried up, and you can help her to do so, Awdry, and my father, sir, will be well pleased to entertain you also," Christian said, turning to the stranger.

"He won't entertain me," Awdry cried. "It is enough that I am my mother's daughter, who is drinking King George's health, I'll warrant, by this

ANIS

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time. I'll e'en go home and help her to do it. Jack Barnby will let me pass through the shop, so a good even to you," and Awdry skipped up the narrow stairs and was gone.

"Such a giddy wench as she is!" Nancy said; "she'd have spilled the broth before she got up the stairs, and nibbled one of the biscuits as a mouse nibbles cheese. But my master will be growing more cross-grained than ever if he is kept waiting. I'll carry up the pipkin of broth, and you can bring the pasties and the sweet cakes."

"I could not present myself to the master of the house in this guise, madam. But do not wait here for me; as soon as your worthy old henchwoman returns, I will retire to the room beyond and resume my proper clothing, then I pay my respects to the father whose daughter has been my good angel—my deliverer."

As he spoke, David Llewellyn had been gazing with admiration at Christian, and when her eyes met his, a flush rose to her cheeks as she said,—

"It may be better as you suggest, sir, that you should sup below. I will tell my father the reason of your absence."

And with this, she took up the dish with the

tempting pasty, and a small plate with the sweet cakes, and disappeared.

When Nancy returned and began to assist at David Llewellyn's toilet, he was seized with so violent a fit of shivering that she said,—

“There's nought for it but to put you into Barnby's bed, and he must sleep under the counter as he has done fifty times before. You must do as you are bid,” she said, and without more ado she took her patient into the little back room which was occupied by Barnby, and laying him on the bed, covered him with every rug and blanket that was available, and making him swallow a potion of her own concoction, left him to his reflections and went to tell her master and young mistress what she had done.

It was no doubt the best and wisest course to pursue, and so the event proved, for the next morning when Michael Paston was in the shop haggling with a customer over some rare bit of porcelain which he had brought for sale, and Christian, seated at her desk, was copying an invoice in her clear, careful hand in the sitting-room overlooking the river, a tap at the door was followed by the entrance of the stranger.

David Llewellyn looked a very different person from the half-drowned man of the previous evening.

He bowed low to Christian, saying, "I am come, madam, before pursuing my way, to lay once more my humble thanks with assurance of life-long devotion at your feet."

As he spoke, he grasped the back of Michael Paston's chair, which was near him. And it was evident he had not yet recovered from the shock he had sustained.

"Be seated, Master Llewellyn, I pray you," Christian said, smiling, for his grave, studied manner amused her.

"I am unused to the ways of large cities like London," he said; "my home has been amongst mountains, and I have passed my life in retirement."

"Your name betrays your country," Christian said, "but you speak English well and with fluency."

"I see what you mean, madam; but though of Welsh descent, I was born and bred in the county of Shropshire, at Church Stretton, and with the exception of a too short time at the Shrewsbury School, I have lived amongst my native hills. All to whom I owe duty or allegiance are dead. While they lived I had but little love for them—they were priest-

ridden and bigoted Catholics; my kindred, it is true, but never kind—grudging me my maintenance, such as it was, and dying, left me with a small provision, and the bulk of their money to a convent.”

“Are you, then, a Catholic?” Christian asked, with anxiety in her voice.

“No; a hundred times no! And I have now come to London to try my fortune. King George is on the throne, whom may Heaven preserve. I would fight for him if need arose. I hail his coming with joy. It was in the hope of adding my voice to the general burst of acclamation at Greenwich that I had taken boat yesterday, hearing it was the best mode of transit. But I am no oarsman, and never reached Greenwich, and was returning to the wharf, as you know, when I could not steer clear of the piers of this bridge—this wonderful bridge—which seems a world’s thoroughfare, for on one side of this house I hear the buzz of many voices and the tramp of many feet, while on the other there is nought but the ripple of the water and the song of the watermen. My thanks are due to the apprentice whose bed I occupied last night. Before I take my leave, I would fain see him and express my gratitude.”

“And whither are you going when you leave this house?” Christian asked.

“By my faith, I scarce know how to answer this. There is, I believe, a relation of mine living near the Tower, but I am minded to be independent, and shall not seek her out till my purse is quite empty. I am something of a scholar, and can write a fair hand, and have fenced and can wield a sword.”

Suddenly his manner changed, and he said,—

“I am giving you my character, and you did not ask for it. What a fool you think me! What an outrageous, conceited fool!”

“Nay, you must not put words into my mouth or thoughts into my head; but I should tell you, sir, that you are in the house of staunch followers and loyal subjects of King James, and that in our eyes the Hanoverian prince, whom the people hailed as King yesterday, is a usurper.”

“Ah! Mistress Christian, if you had known as much as I know of the Papists, you would rejoice that the man you call James the Third was cut out of the succession. A poor, feeble fellow, they say, who has shown that the cowardly weakness of his father is repeated in him.”

Christian’s colour rose, and she said,—

“Under this roof, sir, no word of disrespect can be spoken—nay, no disloyal thought cherished against

the King, James the Third—and the day will surely come when right shall prevail over wrong.”

Christian spoke with great heat, and her beautiful eyes flashed as she said scornfully,—

“It may be that the wrong is right in your eyes; and that being so, it is vain to talk further in this strain,” and Christian took up her pen and reseated herself on the chair by the desk from which she had risen.

“Alack!” David Llewellyn said, “I fear me I have offended you, Mistress Christian, and nought is left for me but to make my apology ere I go. It is not such a parting as I could wish for, differing as we do, but I shall ever be your humble and grateful servant.”

Christian bowed her head, and then turning towards David Llewellyn, she said,—

“It may be, sir, that you will live to change your opinion, and then—”

“Then I may hope to win your favour?”

“I did not say as much, but let what is passed suffice; and now, good-day to you.”

David had risen and stood with his arms resting on the carved back of Michael Paston’s chair. He had a fine, expressive face, and the square jaw and closely-compressed lips did not tell of any likelihood

or even possibility of change. Presently he drew himself up to his full height and said,—

“If I ever read a character aright, I have read yours, Mistress Christian, and I would venture to say a turncoat could never find favour in your eyes,” and with this, his crushed cap in his hand, which bore traces of the drenching it had received as its wearer was struggling in the water, he bowed low and left the room.

As he passed into the shop, he paused before the corner where Jack Barnby was engaged over a large folio while his master behind the counter was talking to a customer on the affairs of the nation.

“I am your debtor for a night’s rest in your bed below stairs,” and he laid a piece of silver on the ledge of the desk.

Jack Barnby was proud, but too poor to despise a gift which would give him many a mug of ale and many a pipe at the ale-house.

He nodded, and said, as he took up the coin,—

“I’ll drink your health before I’m a day older, and I thank you kindly.” Then bending his head and bringing it closer to David’s ear, he said,—“I’ll drink King George’s along with it, only mum’s the word here.”

"I understand," was the answer; "we may meet again?"

Then he passed on to the narrow door over which the sign of "The Looking-Glass" was creaking in the breeze.

Michael Paston was so earnestly engaged in conversation with his customer that he did not notice David Llewellyn till he had reached the threshold, then he called out,—

"Your pardon, sir. Have you been served with what you require, or do you desire my quill to write a letter for you?"

David could not help smiling as he heard it supposed he was not able to use his own pen.

"Nay, sir," he said, "I am in no need of your services, but I have been for some hours the recipient of your bountiful hospitality, for which I beg leave to tender my thanks."

"What, eh? What, are you the man of whom my daughter told me?"

"I am the same, sir—David Llewellyn, at your service; and I would fain hope that if I venture to present myself at your door again you will not refuse me admittance."

"Nay, nay; I will, on the contrary, bid you a kindly welcome, sir," and as David passed out into

the crowded thoroughfare, Michael Paston said,—“A fine presence, a goodly young man enough. I regret that I had no speech with him last evening.”

“Now then to business, my good sir,” and the discussion about the date of the illuminated letters on an old deed, written in fine characters on parchment, was resumed.

Jack Barnby, who had heard what his master said, laughed in his sleeve.

“Kindly welcome! Why, the master would sooner pitch him into the river than pull him out, if he knew what errand brought him to London. It’s a rare joke to think how little he knows about it.”

David Llewellyn, as he said, was little used to the stir of a town. Shrewsbury had been his metropolis, but the greater part of his life had been spent under the shadow of the hills which make the neighbourhood of Church Stretton one the loveliest districts in England.

He made his way slowly towards the gate at the southward end of the bridge. The shops with all their wares displayed attracted him, and several smiling shopwomen invited him in to inspect the various articles which were for sale at a cheap rate.

“Will you buy, sir—will you buy?”

The speaker was a buxom woman, well in the

prime of life, and she did not take David's first refusal and shake of the head as conclusive.

"Step in, sir, step in! I have a pretty lot of ribands. I'll warrant you have some fair lady who would like to be suited with them. Dear heart" she said, "we ought all to don our best and gayest clothes, for the King is safe on the throne, and is proclaimed without much ado by those Popish Jacobites. It's all very well for crabbed old folks like Master Paston yonder to cry "fool" to every man, woman and child who don't see with his eyes. But, thank Heaven, the English people know better than to risk having another King James to try to force 'em into the Pope's clutches. What! won't you buy a knot of ribbon, sir? Sure you have a lady-love, such a likely young gentleman as you are!"

David was anxious to get away, but he was shy and little accustomed to the kind of jests which Mistress Chenery thought generally acceptable to young men of his age.

Yet he did not wish to be discourteous, and presently exchanged a silver coin for a knot of cherry-coloured ribbons, which he stowed away in the large pocket of his coat, wondering much what he should do with his purchase.

He was just turning away, when Awdry came up, her cheeks like roses, and her eyes sparkling.

"Mother!" Then seeing David, she stopped short.

"How do you fare to-day after your ducking, sir?" she said, with a curtsy. "I hope none the worse. This gentleman, mother, is the same who ran his boat against the bridge yesterday, and Christian hauled him up and cut her fingers to the bone, pretty near. I helped also, but got no thanks. Barnby and old Nancy had also a hand in saving you, sir."

"I know it, and I am grateful. As to you, Mistress Awdry, I had no time to give you thanks, for when I had collected my thoughts, you were gone. Permit me now to present you with the ribbons I have just bought, and then I will bid you good-day. I am a stranger in London, and scarce know how to find my way through the crowds, but I should be grateful if you could direct me to the house of one Robert Mills, who lives hard by the Tower—in Tower Place."

"To Robert Mills—he that does business at the quay? Why, he is my cousin. What do you know of him?" Mrs. Chenery exclaimed.

"His wife is of kin to my mother; I have never

seen her, and she may refuse to acknowledge our kinship."

"Not she, not she; if ever there was a good woman, it is Anne Mills. She'll make you welcome, for she has a room to spare for lodgers."

"Oh!" isn't this queer, mother?" Awdry said. "I could clap my hands for joy. I like odd things to happen, and here is an odd thing, surely. Why, there's a grand supper at Cousin Mills's on Friday in honour of Harry Mills, who is come home from foreign parts. And we are bidden to it, and Christian Paston also, so there'll be a merry meeting, won't there? We'll stir up Christian, and make her dance; see if we don't. Do you love dancing, Master Llewellyn?"

David shook his head.

"I never danced a step in my life, Mistress Awdry."

"Then I'll teach you; right foot first, left brought up, and—"

"Child, do not run on like this. Master Llewellyn will take you for a silly, flighty wench, with no more sense than you were born with. And now, as to the way of reaching the Tower, a boat is the easiest."

"No, no, mother. He'll have another ducking. And we sha'n't be there to save him."

"Peace, Awdry, I say."

Then Mrs. Chenery proceeded to give David minute directions to the stairs not a hundred yards from the gate of the bridge, where he could hire a waterman for a trifle to take him safely to the landing-stage by the Tower. Once there, he had only to enquire for Master Mills at Tower Place and he would soon find the house.

"And," she continued, "you may tell Anne Mills you have seen me, and that she is to treat you to the best, and that we shall be at her house sharp at six on Friday, and ready for a fine, jolly evening."

David pursued his way after this unexpected revelation, that he was likely to have friends in the Chenerys, with a lighter heart.

Ever since he had left his old home, he had felt that utter loneliness and desolation which always press upon us when alone in a crowded city, where every face is strange, where no voice greets us, and no hand is stretched out to grasp ours with a friendly pressure. And it might be that he had made other friends by the upsetting of his boat on the previous afternoon. For Christian's face, as she bent over him struggling in the water, was ever present to him. Awdry's pink-and-white prettiness, her jaunty air, her merry laughter, soon vanished out of David's recol-

lection, but the image of Christian remained. He wished he had parted from her in another fashion. His concluding words were not what he now wished he had said. Indeed, he rated himself for all that he had said and all that he had left unsaid during the time he had been in Christian's company.

"She thinks of me as a coward, I'll warrant," crying out for a rope and for help; "but a sudden plunge into seething water was enough to scare me, all unused as I am to river traffic. But I would go through it all again, if by any chance I could recover her good opinion. I have lost it. Change my opinions! Yes, that is what she said. No, never! not even to win her favour! Never! I will do my best to make my peace with her at Robert Mills's house, if ever I get there—" "There is a divinity which shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will," and it may be that beneficent power Shakespeare speaks of is shaping mine."

David Llewellyn had paused in one of the recesses formed by an opening between the houses on Old London Bridge. Those who have looked out from a like opening on the Ponte Vecchio in the city of Florence, over the swift-flowing Arno, may be better able to picture the scene upon which David Llewellyn

gazed with all the keen interest which is the outcome of novelty.

It was a brilliant September day. The broad Thames was covered with crafts of every size; and barges, with flags fluttering in the breeze, were passing to and fro. On one bank of the river were many spires and towers, glistening in the sunlight. In the opposite direction was the tower of Saint Mary Overie standing out in strong relief like a sentinel on duty, watching over the river, on which it had seen so many freights of joy and sorrow passing and repassing in the centuries gone by, the silent highway to the gloomy Tower, along which, before many months had passed, there were to be led noble prisoners who had fought, as they believed, in a just cause, for their rightful sovereign.

CHAPTER III.

A CITY MERRYMAKING.

DAVID LLEWELLYN found his way to the Mills's house with but little difficulty. He had no cause to complain of the warmth of his reception, and his kinship with Anne Mills was not only at once acknowledged but gladly recognised.

"Yes," Mrs. Mills said, "I was like a sister to your mother, and you are kindly welcome. Step in and let me hear what you mean to do in London. We are settling down, let's hope, now, but, as Robert says, we may be in a heap of trouble any day. The followers of King James are lying quiet just now, but they'll soon be hatching some scheme which will be like a match to tinder. I am a loyal subject of King James the Third in my heart," Mrs. Mills said, "not that I trouble myself too much about it. I have too many things to think of, and my boy Harry has just come home from across the seas, after we thought the ship had gone to pieces. We shall be glad to see you at supper next Friday, when we are to have

a merrymaking, because Harry is safe at home. Now, tell me where you are putting up."

"I have only had a lodging for two nights at an inn, and last night I spent in a house on London Bridge."

"On London Bridge! there's a cousin of Robert's lives there—Matilda Chenery. She keeps a haberdasher's and odds-and-ends-shop. She has a long tongue but a kind heart. I've no fault to find with her except spoiling that giddy little wench Awdry."

Great was Mrs. Mills's amazement when she heard from David the history of his upset in the water, and his rescue by Christian Paston, his acquaintance with Awdry, and the conversation he had with her that morning.

In the end, David was invited to take up his abode in Mrs. Mills's house, with the understanding that, if paying lodgers presented themselves, he was to vacate the large chamber in the front of the house, and retire to an attic in the roof.

"But I hope I shall pay you my dues," David said, "for food and lodging. I shall look out for work. I did not come to London to be idle, and maybe Mr. Mills can help me to find employment."

"You don't look over strong," Mrs. Mills said doubtfully, "and Robert's work is mostly at the

wharves. You look more like a scholar than a working man. Like your poor mother. I never saw her after she married, and she died when you were born. How many years ago is it?"

"Twenty-two," David said, "and my father soon followed her to the grave. I have lived with some distant kindred of his, of whom the less I say the better. They cheated me of my dues, and left me but a pittance from my father's property. The rest was squandered on priests and their outrageous claims. Who can wonder that I hate the very name of Papists?"

"Ah, well-a-day! That's the cry many take up; but there are right good and God-fearing people amongst them—we mustn't forget that. There's a dear lady, Mistress Morgan, born and bred a Catholic, who is an angel of goodness, always ready to do a good turn to me, sending me lodgers in hard times—for we have many mouths to feed—and when it is a hard winter, there's scarce anything to do at the wharf."

"Then you cannot want another added," David said; "but I have yet enough in my purse to repay you for your hospitality."

"Now, no more talk like that. Come and see the room where I will lodge you for the present, and

there you are welcome to bide for many a day. Blood is thicker than water, and I am not the woman to forget you are your mother's son."

"But what will your husband say?"

"That I am right. Robert has a noble, kind heart, as you'll find out; and though we have had our troubles, we are always sure of each other, which every wife can't say of every husband."

Before the party assembled in honour of Harry Mills, on the following Friday, David Llewellyn was fairly established in Mrs. Mill's house. He found himself looking forward to meeting Christian again with some anxiety.

They had parted in a formal fashion, and had in a few words sounded a note of disagreement which would probably make discord for the future. He had distinctly avowed his loyalty to the Hanoverian prince, and Christian had as distinctly declared she was a fervent Jacobite. The guests came before the appointed hour; they were all of the class to which Mills himself belonged, and, with scarcely an exception, adherents of the new King.

Their interests as tradesmen made them desire, above all else, peace. While Queen Anne lived, trade had flourished, and had recovered from the

unsettled condition of the country during King James's short and troubled reign.

Besides the paralysing effect of Monmouth's rebellion, and the scenes of bloodshed and shameful, unjust sentences passed on the rebels by Jeffreys, there were plots and counter-plots, and every man seemed to be against his neighbour, and to doubt the sincerity of his principles.

It was then but natural that many of the law-abiding and industrious tradesmen, in every large town as well as in London, should hail with joy the accession of a Protestant king, whom it was said Queen Anne in her last days had desired to succeed her. The people were tired of strife, and even the bitterness of religious differences was forgotten in the hope of security from internal wars and commotions, which so grievously affected the trade of the country.

David Llewellyn was not a man to pass unnoticed in the crowd of neighbours and friends who had come to celebrate young Harry Mills's return.

He had replaced the brown surtout with a dark velvet coat, and his knee-breeches were tied with knots of deep crimson riband. He wore at his belt his short sword, and the cuffs and neck of his coat were edged with fine linen bands.

The long hair which had lain in matted, tangled

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masses over his shoulders was now brushed and combed, and tossed back from a forehead under which a pair of deep, earnest eyes scanned Robert Mills's guests as they came in to the large kitchen, where the supper was laid on a long board which was soon groaning under the weight of a large sirloin of beef, a haunch of mutton—to say nothing of the pasties and sweet confections which were introduced amongst the heavier viands.

Strong ale flowed freely from a barrel to which Mrs. Mills's eldest girl had frequent recourse with brown earthenware jugs, pouring out from them foaming drafts into the large mugs with which the guests were supplied.

When the business of eating was over and the heavier dishes were removed, conversation began to be more general.

And at the conclusion of the meal, the grace-cup was passed round by the master of the feast with the words,—

“Friends and neighbours, I ask you to drink to the health of my son, Harry Mills, whom God has brought back safely from the perils of the sea.”

This toast was received with cheers, and the sunburnt boy rose to return thanks for all good wishes.

Then, to the surprise of everyone, he said,—

“I crave leave to ask you to drink the health of His Majesty”—he paused, and looked round at the faces which were all turned towards him—“His Majesty James the Third of England and Eighth of Scotland.”

The toast was received in ominous silence, and Robert Mills, who was in truth a somewhat faint-hearted Jacobite, said, as he saw not a single hand amongst the guests raise the grace-cup to his lips,—

“Tut, tut, boy, we will not touch vexed questions on this joyful occasion. We wish the new King well, and now let us ask our friends to drink thy good mother’s health, boy, coupled with thy young sisters’ here, Sue and Patty.”

And now another voice was heard, and David Llewellyn rose from his seat next Christian Paston.

“My good kinsman,” he said, addressing Mr. Mills, “it is an old adage that silence means consent, but mine means entire dissent. I am a stranger amongst you, and maybe you will deem me over bold to speak, but I would ask this fine company to drink to the health of King George the First, whose coming frustrates the plots of evil-disposed persons, and for whose coming to take the crown of this realm let us give God thanks.”

Loud cheers broke forth now as the grace-cup went round, and "King George, God bless him!" was repeated by everyone as the wine was sipped.

Christian Paston passed it from her, and said in a low voice,—

"It was ill advised to moot these vexed questions, as Master Mills has said; but *you*, Master Llewellyn, are the most to blame."

"In your eyes, doubtless," David replied; "and I must be content to bear your displeasure."

The guests were now rising from the benches, which were pushed back, and the large kitchen cleared for the dance, the men all helping to do this, while the women were invited to the best parlour by Mrs. Mills.

All differences were forgotten now, and there was a general feeling of kindness for Harry, who had been given up for lost. For mothers' hearts are the same, whatever political divisions may exist, and Mrs. Mill's tender, gentle disposition was one which had endeared her to all who knew her.

While the ladies of the party were thus engaged in friendly conversation and exchange of compliments with Mrs. Mills, a servant in livery appeared, to say that Mistress Morgan's chair was at the door, and she asked if she could have speech with Mrs. Mills.

"Mistress Morgan! that dear lady. Yes, forsooth! she is ever welcome here; bid her come in."

There was a little flutter amongst the company, when, in another minute, Mrs. Mills, who had hastened to the door, returned with Mrs. Morgan.

"Good even to you all," she said, seating herself with easy, well-bred grace on a settle by the large wood-fire, the blazing logs giving light to the room. "Good even. I am well pleased that you should have come to welcome my friend's son home after many perils. Ah! Awdry Chenery, you will soon be footing it in the dance, down the middle and up again. I warrant your daughter will not lack partners, Mistress Chenery."

Mistress Chenery smiled and curtsied, and cleared her throat, but for once her voluble tongue was not ready.

"But I must see the hero of the hour. Call Harry hither, Mistress Mills."

The proud mother was only too pleased to fetch her son, who was a fine specimen of his class. Frank and outspoken, with a broad, good-humoured smile on his bronzed face, he made a bow to the good lady and said in answer to her inquiry,—

"I am well and hearty, madame, and I am glad

to return to this country, where I could only wish the rightful King reigned."

"Ah!" Mrs. Morgan said, "there are many who echo that wish, but it is the path of true wisdom to hold one's peace in these perilous times. We must all desire the peace and prosperity of our country."

"Not at the cost of honour, madam," Harry said.

"Well, well, lead me to my chair, for I am on the way to her Grace the Duchess of Montrose, who is in town for a short time."

Then with pretty curtseys and repeated waves of the hand, the pearls in her brooch flashing in the blaze of the wood fire, Mrs. Morgan allowed Harry Mills to lead her by the hand to her chair.

"My good boy," she said in a low voice, "take my counsel and do not moot vexed questions, nor disturb yonder happy party. Be discreet, and let no discords trouble your parents who are rejoicing in your return."

Harry Mills replied,—

"I will do my best to keep the peace, madam; but profess allegiance to King George—"

"Hush! Hush, boy!" and Mrs. Morgan tapped Harry's arm with her fan, and slipped lightly into the chair. The link-boys' torches made a halo of

lurid light round it, as it was borne away in the fog rising from the Thames.

"Why will you not join the dance, Master Llewellyn?" Awdry Chenery asked, as, heated and breathless, she sank down on a low stool near the place where David stood. "Why do you stand aloof with that grave face?"

"By choice," was the reply; "and it may be by necessity also—I cannot dance."

"I'll teach you as I told you t'other day."

"I thank you kindly for your good intentions; but, for my part, I think dancing men look like fools."

"For shame," Awdry said; "you will have to learn better manners. Fools indeed! they look what they are—merry fellows. See Harry Mills, now, bringing Christian Paston to a seat to rest. He is no fool, and he is saying pretty things to Christian. I'll warrant I should be angered against him if it were anybody but Christian, but I love her dearly—she is beautiful, no one is like her, and yet she is not wedded. Her old father keeps her close shut up writing and reading to him. Suitors have no chance of getting near her, and besides, old Master Paston is such a fierce Jacobite—he raves at my mother and anyone who dares to say King George is the rightful King."

Awdry prattled on, and David did not give much heed to what she was saying; his eyes were fixed on the two figures to whom Awdry had directed his attention. Christian unquestionably looked of a very different type from the hoydens who had been prancing about till they were red in the face, with disordered hair and torn ruffles, taking deep draughts of spiced drinks which did not tend to cool their heated blood.

David took in at a glance that what Awdry Chenery said was true, and that the fine young sailor who was leaning over Christian was making the most of his opportunity, and, as Awdry declared, pouring pretty flattering things into her ear. Harry Mills did not know what shyness or reserve meant. He had seen something of life beyond the narrow groove in which his father and mother were contented to walk.

Their eldest child, born when his mother was scarcely sixteen, he might well pass for her brother rather than her son. Frank and fearless and a zealous partisan, he was the very opposite to David Llewellyn, who had led a retired life, and with few associates. He had been looked upon, by those who had brought him up, as an encumbrance, and failing to get him to declare himself a Papist and take his

little patrimony into a monastery, they treated him with indifference if not with harshness, and when they died a few months before this time, David found but a small part of the money forthcoming that was due to him from his father's estate. Every penny that was available had gone to the religious house in the neighbourhood.

David had managed to get books, and was, with the exception of the short time he spent at Shrewsbury School, self-educated. Brooding over his wrongs, he had conceived the strongest aversion for the very name of Papist.

Harry Mills, on the contrary, looked upon the banishment of James the Second in the past as a grievous wrong, while the setting aside of his son's claims in the present to the throne filled him with indignation.

We who look back on the history of that time must needs judge the partisans on both sides leniently, though acknowledging that the revolution of 1688 saved us from the weak rule of an ill-advised and bigoted sovereign, who broke faith with his people and played into the hands of the Pope—we can afford to sympathise with the chivalrous feeling his misfortunes and sorrows awoke in many hearts.

In all ages this same inborn chivalry has raised

the sufferer to a high place in popular esteem, a place he would never have reached in prosperity and ease.

However much a man may have been condemned for his actions, and vials of wrath poured upon him in life, when death comes to him by violence, as in the case of Becket, or he falls from power to abject misery like Wolsey, the current of sympathy is too strong for us and sweeps away all bitterness and rancour, leaving only divine pity behind.

David Llewellyn had brooded over his own wrongs till he was quite unable to separate them from those inflicted on the country by the misrule of James the Second.

He was thus only anxious to show how cordially he rejoiced in the coming of the Hanoverian prince, and hoped that in some way he might serve what he believed to be a righteous cause.

How he was to do this was yet wrapped in uncertainty.

"Now, Master Llewellyn," Awdry said, "here comes Harry Mills to take me for the next dance. Go and beg Christian to dance with you."

David answered sharply,—

"Did I not tell you I could not dance, and would not if I could?"

“What a loss for the fine ladies,” Harry Mills said, laughing. “How will they live over the disappointment?”

David did not think it worth while to reply to this taunt, but the animosity existing between the two men took a more acute form from that moment.

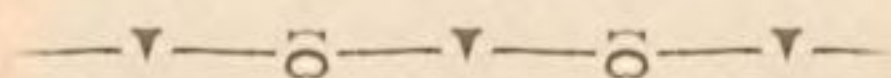
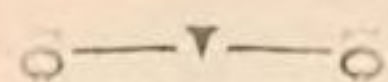
David Llewellyn took life, as we now say, too seriously—Harry Mills too lightly. He loved a little opposition for opposition’s sake, and he was well pleased that, by proposing a toast for King James, he had petrified the guests with astonishment.

“A forward young jackanapes,” Mistress Chenery called him, and he was discussed in no measured terms by several others of those who had met at his father’s house to celebrate his safe return.

David was meditating crossing the floor to the place where Christian sat, but was held back by an unusual amount of shyness, when she rose from the bench and came towards him.

“These are somewhat noisy festivities, Master Llewellyn. Like me, I think you prefer quieter scenes. Indeed, I am so much with my father, and interested in what interests him, that I am only longing for the time to come when I may retire.”

“Mistress Paston, if you are but little used to scenes like this—where people jump madly about to



the sound of a fiddle—how far less used am I. I detest it, and I marvel why men and women can make themselves so foolish—”

“I was one of them but half-an-hour ago,” Christian said with a smile—her somewhat rare smile which, when it came, lighted up her whole face. “I was one of them and there is some pleasure to me in the measured step of the minuet, but it is not acceptable in company like this. Young Harry Mills is brimming over with spirits and fun—”

“Do you like such fun, Mistress Paston?”

“For a change, yes,” Christian said. “I like to see young folk full of joy.”

“Then my company must be distasteful to you; for, when the heart is heavy, to see the follies of others only increases the sadness.”

“But why so sad, Master Llewellyn?”

“The sadness which comes of being alone in the world, with none to care whether I am dead or alive.”

“Nay, now, I call that ungracious! Doubtless those who pulled you out of the water cared?”

“You would have done the same for any unlucky wight who struggled in the water below you.”

“Yes, that is true,” Christian said; “but why let this render our service less prized?”

"Less prized! nay, how can you think it is not prized. Night and day—day and night I have seen your face bending over me—my angel of goodness—my guardian angel. You judge me amiss, Mistress Paston—very much amiss."

"Well, we will not speak more of that beginning of our intercourse; rather let us talk of your views."

"My views! You know them. I am anti-Jacobite to my last breath."

"I did not mean views as to politics. I meant, how do you propose to employ yourself in London? It is a big place and there is need of caution."

Christian almost spoke as a mother might speak to her son—there was in her feelings for David a strange, protecting carefulness for him, which sprung, perhaps, from the fact that she had saved his life.

For where is the woman to be found who does not feel a sort of proprietorship in anyone she has nursed in sickness, and by her care called back from the gates of the grave.

Christian Paston's feeling for David Llewellyn had something of this nature in it, while his was a great deal more than gratitude for service rendered—it was fast becoming a passionate devotion and worship for her as for a superior being.

"I have been thinking," she said, "that it may

be my father could find a place for you. He has many friends amongst scholars and men who love to discover old treasures hidden in the dust of ages. Will you come to-morrow and let him speak to you? But"—she hesitated—"but you must on no account speak of your allegiance to George the First. It is a forbidden subject."

"I could not pledge myself to silence," David said. "I do not care, like yonder fool," he continued, pointing to Harry Mills, who was capering down the dance with Awdry Chenery, kicking his heels and nodding his head to the music, "to make myself conspicuous, when there is no need, by calling on sensible people to drink the health of a sovereign whose rule they do not acknowledge. Yet I would not sail under false colours, and, judging by Master Paston's fierce partisanship for King James the Third, as he is called, I feel sure no service of mine would be acceptable to him."

"We can but try," Christian said; "therefore come on the morrow and I will let you know by signs whether there is hope for you to be employed."

Grateful as David felt for the sympathy Christian showed him, he did not care to be under obligations to her father. Like many shy and reserved young

men, he was proud and sensitive, and resented anything like patronage.

"I have a small pittance," he said, "Mistress Christian, which, with the kindness of my kinswoman, Mistress Mills, will keep me from starving."

Christian's quick ear heard the note of wounded pride in his voice and hastened to say,—

"I well know you will easily find work to your mind; it was in my father's interest I spoke as well as yours. But I still hope you will find yourself at our door before many days are past. It is near midnight and I would fain be going, as I came, in the company of Mistress Chenery and Awdry. All sober folks will be abed and asleep by now, and the streets will be quieter than earlier, but I am anxious to depart. There goes Awdry off again with Harry Mills, and Mistress Chenery also with that portly old haberdasher who has a shop on the bridge. Sure there is a time to give up dancing as well as a time to enjoy it."

"May I crave the honour of accompanying you to your own house? I am at your service."

"I shall be ready when I have bidden Mrs. Mills good-night." "Ah! here she comes!"

Mrs. Mills was a tall, fragile-looking woman, with an abundance of yellowish hair, and as she came to

the place where Christian sat, she sank as if very tired on the bench by her side.

"Why do you not join the dancers, good cousin?" she said, addressing David. "It is not well done to keep the fairest of our guests to yourself in a corner."

"I am not dancing any more, Mistress Mills. It is near midnight, and I would fain go home. My father will be imagining mischief has befallen me."

"You must wait for Mistress Chenery and her escort, Master Burton. Dear heart! I marvel to see two people of their age capering about in that fashion. It is all right and proper for the young, and it vexes me, Christian, to see you keeping in a corner with my grave cousin."

"Indeed, you must not lay the blame of Mistress Christian preferring rest to dancing, to my charge," David said; "it was of her own choosing."

"And now I am claiming Master Llewellyn's offer of his company homewards."

"You must have further guard. You must wait for Mistress Chenery."

"Nay," Christian said, firmly, thinking that, excited with frequent sips from the mugs of spiced drinks which were freely circulated, neither Mistress Chenery nor her portly neighbour, Master Burton,

nor Harry Mills would be much protection in case of need, and were likely to pick a quarrel with some late wayfarer or footpad, instead of walking like law-abiding, sober citizens.

Christian held to her purpose, and in another few minutes, closely wrapped in hood and cloak, she was threading the deserted thoroughfares with David Llewellyn.

CHAPTER IV.

BY MOONLIGHT.

LONDON was wrapped in repose as the clock of Saint Mary Overie chimed for midnight.

The streets of the city were to-night lighted by a moon high in the heavens. Her silver beams lay upon the sombre bastions of the gloomy Tower, and upon the gabled roofs and many church spires of the city.

Moonlight in these days is scarcely heeded in our great towns and cities. Yellow gas-lamps flare before us, or electric light makes all objects seen as clearly as if it were day.

But two centuries ago, except for the occasional flicker of an oil-lamp, or the lurid flame of a link-boy's torch, darkness reigned supreme when no moon was in the sky.

As Christian and David Llewellyn passed along Old London Bridge, the road between the bands of houses was in shadow, except at the openings, where silver light lay with soft radiance across it.

At one of these Christian paused, saying to her companion,—

“See how calm and untroubled the river looks—who could guess that it was ever ruffled by a strong breeze or ploughed by so many barges and boats, leaving their rough track behind.”

David Llewellyn had a real appreciation for what was beautiful in Nature. The purple shadows flitting over his native hills, the tinkle of little wayside brooks, the sweet, fresh air of the country whispering in the trees, had a message for him, seldom put into words, for there had been no ears to listen to him, and sometimes written on paper in quaint and irregular verse which no eye ever saw, but they were often touched with the real poetic instinct which glorifies common things, and gives “the meanest flower that blows” a meaning and a charm which are to those who know how to find them a very crown of life.

It was then only likely, that as he stood by Christian’s side, looking out on the broad Thames sleeping in the moonlight, girt round by houses and churches, where silence reigned, that the hidden springs of his nature should be touched, and forgetting the reserve and self-consciousness which so often

as : anns : ann
 ue : suue : suue

anns : anns : anns

bound him as with a chain, he should give his feelings words.

"Yes, it is beautiful," he said. "I scarce ever thought I should find in this great city such a scene of peace and purity, and yet it will all fade away with the morning light. There will be noise and tumult, and all the animosities of contending parties will raise their heads, like a hydra, and spoil it. You must love this river, Mistress Christian, and methinks I must love it also, for without my fall into its then turbid waters I should not have known you. I would to Heaven all differences between us might be washed out as by the waters of Lethe."

"This is not the place to disturb one's peace by the thought of differences. Neither you nor I, Master Llewellyn, would care to see the other turn round like a vane on one of yonder steeples with every wind that blows. Let us forget we differ while still holding to our own opinions."

"I am ready to do this," David said, "but honesty compels me to say that the few days I have spent in London have made me a firmer adherent of King George than before."

"He has but a poor presence, I hear," Christian said, "and can scarce speak a word of our language. And my father learned from good authority that he

is ruled by women; for his Queen has been imprisoned for many years on a grave charge."

"All you say may be true, Mistress Christian; nor have I any ground for denying it. What we look at, who hail the coming of a Protestant prince is, that we shall escape the trammels of Rome and be free from the detestable tyranny of a King who would be priest-ridden as his father was before him, if indeed the weak despot was his father, which many better instructed than I am deny."

"Ah!" Christian said, raising herself from leaning against the low parapet of the bridge, "if you can believe an old wives' fable like that, all argument is useless. You and I are too young to remember the Revolution of 1688, and the story which has given the style and title of Pretender to the Prince whom we call James the Third. We must move on now, Master Llewellyn, for I hear voices and footsteps approaching. Probably the Chenerys and their escort, Harry Mills. I will join them and bid you good-morning. I am but a hundred yards from my home," and before David could detain her, Christian had gathered her cloak round her, pulled her hood closely over her face, and was gone.

"So beautiful, yet so determined, with what courage must any man dare to approach her as a

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suitors. Who am I to dream of her favour? Yet, there was wondrous softness in her eyes as, seeing me standing lonely in that noisy crowd of revellers, she came toward me and blessed me with her sweet words. My guardian angel, I called her, as she bent over me and saved me from drowning. Mayhap it would have been better if I had gone down into yonder waters. I should have left none to mourn for me, none to care whether I was dead or alive. Yet, I fought for life as the waters buffeted me and choked me. Such is God's will for us poor mortals that we should love life, even though it holds but little for us to make it dear."

By this it will be seen that David Llewellyn was of a somewhat morbid disposition, a disposition fed by solitude and communing with Nature in all her moods, without the help of human sympathy, or that intercourse with other men which is, after all, necessary for the formation of character.

Yet, there was in him a latent power, and a certain resolution to carve his own fortune in the great city to which he had come, a forlorn stranger.

David was roused from his meditation by the sound of singing.

Harry Mills was shouting at the pitch of his voice

one of the Jacobite rhymes that had become a part of English folk lore.

He was decidedly merry with wine, and a girl's voice was heard trying to stop his song.

“Jamie is our rightful King,
Bonnie Jamie is England's pride.
Cease your foolish raving,
And take the other side.
The other side, the rightful side,
Jamie is our King.”

“Oh! I prythee, stop! The bridge folk are almost all for King George.”

It was Mistress Chenery's shrill-voiced entreaty.

“Stop, I pray you,” besought Awdry.

“For a kiss I will stop. Come, pretty Awdry, give me what I ask, and, by Heaven, I'll shout long live King George with my lips, though I curse him in my heart.”

There was a little scream, and a patter of light footsteps, and then the shutting of a door and the sound of bolts and bars, which told that Mistress Chenery and Awdry were safely in their own house.

David was not very willing to have Harry Mills's company homewards, and he kept in the shadow of the houses on one side of the opening, hoping that Harry Mills would pass on.

The watchman's voice calling the hours along the bridge in slow, sonorous tones, as he passed with his lanthorn, now came near.

"It's just one of the clock, and a fine moonlight morning. What are you bawling like that for, youngster?" the watchman said to Harry. "I'd as lief set the constable on you."

A loud laugh was Harry Mills's reply.

"You'll be laughing on the wrong side of your mouth soon, and be clapped into prison for treason, and serve you right, you young fool. Laugh on, laugh on, it don't hurt me. But you'll be caught before long, and your stupid mouth will be gagged."

This only made Harry Mills shout the louder,—

"Take the other side,
The other side, the rightful side,
Jamie is our King."

And then, to David's discomfiture, Harry turned aside to the opening, where he stood, still singing the refrain of his song.

"Hallo! who are you? I swear it's Master Soberface. Come on, my hearty, and let's go to roost together. I've a swimming in my head, and I'll take a friendly arm. Join in my chorus, won't ye?"

As he spoke, Harry grasped David's unwilling arm and said,—

"It's homeward bound now, my hearty—three cheers for—"

"The wine was in and the wit was out," and David tried to free himself from the boy's grasp, but in vain.

There was nothing for it but to guide his faltering steps towards home.

It was not done without difficulty, and when they reached Tower Place, Harry's good-tempered banter had changed into irascibility.

He thundered at the door with the butt-end of his thick stick, and it was opened by his gentle mother, who had been anxiously awaiting his return.

She was evidently distressed that David Llewellyn should see her boy in this condition. She took his arm, and said,—

"Come up to your bed, Harry, and bid Master Llewellyn good night. Ah! well-a-day, I had best say good morning, for it is past one o'clock."

Harry was breaking out into snatches of a song, of which the words were hard to distinguish, when his father appeared at the top of the narrow stairs.

"Hold your peace, you foolish boy," he said, and descending a few steps, he took hold of his son with a strong hand, and disappeared with him in the darkness.

"Step in for a minute, Master Llewellyn, I would fain speak to you about my boy. It is mostly his father's fault for letting the ale flow so freely. Harry's head is soon upset; but, oh, it is a sad end of his home-coming feast to see him like this. You'll not speak of it to his discredit?" Mrs. Mills said.

"No; you may be sure I shall keep silence. He was singing Jacobite songs on London Bridge, which is dangerous in these times."

"Who heard him? who heard him?" Mistress Mills asked in dismay.

"Well, all London Bridge, for that matter, could have heard him. Let us hope most of the inhabitants were in their first sleep, which is sound. Do not be distressed, Mistress Mills; no harm will come of it."

"You are an enemy of the Jacobites, Master Llewellyn—you won't tell of my boy."

"You may trust me, madam, I could not betray the son of one who has treated me with so much hearty kindness."

"It is grievous," Mistress Mills said, "to think of all the bad blood this question of who is the rightful king and who is not, has caused. I heard them saying this evening that there will be a rising in Scotland before long, and that it will be the Duke

of Monmouth's rebellion over again. While you live under our roof, David Llewellyn, let us forget differences, and, for your mother's sake, be true to each other. I only long for peace, and no good comes of fierce upholding of one's opinions. There's poor Master Paston, he is ready to knock anyone down who dares to say, Long live King George. As to Christian, she is of the same mind as her father, but she is temperate and cautious. I only wish she could be married. I was married at sixteen, and Christian is twenty-six."

"Has she many suitors?" David asked, feeling glad that the dying embers of the wood fire would not betray the blush that rose to his face as he put the question.

"Suitors? She had them by dozens at one time, but something went wrong with one who went off with a grand lady, after hanging about Michael Paston's shop for months, and, as we all thought, courting her. She thought the same, poor girl, and she has been grave and quiet ever since. I call her tied to her father's apron-strings—if he had one!—and it is a sin and a shame. Now, there is Mistress Chenery's Awdry here, there and everywhere, a chance if she doesn't get into some scrape or other, little harem-scarem hussy."

This conversation with Mrs. Mills left its mark upon David, and presented his guardian angel to him in a new light. He determined to follow Mrs. Mills's advice, and keep his opinions to himself, and not flaunt them in the face of anyone, especially of Master Paston.

He had no doubt in his own mind that what he conceived to be the right cause would prosper, and now King George was on the throne and proclaimed with but little show of dissatisfaction, surely his faithful subjects might "lie low," and, in other words, "keep quiet."

In a few days, through Mr. Mills's good offices, David was taken into the service of a well-known lawyer's scrivener in the neighbourhood of the Temple. David's excellent handwriting and precision were valuable for the copying of deeds and letters, and he was speedily recognised as a man of ability and promise.

Now and again he presented himself at Michael Paston's house on Sundays, and always received a welcome. The old man lent him books, of which he had a store; and by keeping off the present, and talking chiefly of the past, David managed to win favour with Michael Paston, who pronounced him

again and again to be very superior to the knaves and fine-dressed fools who strutted up and down London Bridge to display their finery, and to ogle the girls and put them out of countenance.

Christian was not the only person in Michael's house who knew David's real sentiments.

Jack Barnby knew them, and watched his opportunity to make them known with no very good motive. Jack worshipped Christian from a distance, it is true, but though often hopelessly feeling her to be so immeasurably above him, yet he was jealous of another man daring to poach on his territory.

Once let the master know he was admitting a loyal subject of King George into his house, and making him welcome to sit down at his hospitable board, and Jack knew he would never again be suffered to cross the threshold.

But Jack Barnby bided his time, and was civil and even deferential in his manner to David, though he inwardly wished that he had snatched the rope from his hands and let him drown before Christian's eyes.

Old Nancy pursued her accustomed avocations in the basement storey, and scolded and indulged Jack Barnby by turns. She, too, made an idol of

Christian, but she did not suffer Jack to speak of her, except in terms of respect, as befitted the apprentice of Master Paston. The bare notion of his daring to cherish a secret adoration for her young mistress never entered her head.

He might as well have lifted his eyes to a royal princess.

Awdry Chenery flitted in and out, full of her little vanities and flirtations, and fancying herself in love with Harry Mills. She shed oceans of tears when the young sailor was ordered to join his ship before Christmas.

Christian showed what sympathy she could command, but she knew out of sight would be out of mind with Awdry, and a new love would soon drive away the memory of the old.

There was a lull in public affairs, and peace-loving people began to hope that King George would be secure upon the throne.

He showed himself a man of determined will, and made short work of dismissing the Secretary Bolingbroke, who, to his bitter mortification, found himself superseded by Lord Townshend.

This the King had done before he landed, and before he had taken up his residence in England. It showed which way the wind blew, and it came

scarcely as a surprise to thoughtful people when the King nominated a new ministry, composed almost entirely of Whigs.

George the First proved a man whose firmness of purpose was often exaggerated till it became dogged obstinacy, and it was soon seen that to attempt to alter his decision was a hopeless matter.

Queen Anne's old favourites found themselves out in the cold, and the Duchess of Marlborough on her knees entreated the Duke to refuse to hold any appointment under the new King.

But he had not the courage, or, as we should now say, the pluck of his wife. He still held certain offices, though he had but the shadow of his past authority.

He was treated with respect but no confidence, and never summoned to a meeting of the cabinet, of which he was a nominal member.

But it is a sign of the wide-spread belief in a restoration, that the old favourite of Queen Anne, and the hero of a hundred fights, should lend the Pretender to the Crown a large sum of money to assist him to raise the Jacobite rebellion of the following year.

BOOK II.

“Certainly Virtue is like precious odours—most fragrant when they are incensed, or crushed.

“For Prosperity doth best discover Vice, but Adversity doth best discover Virtue.”—LORD BACON.

BOOK II

CHAPTER I
OF THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE
ARTS AND MANUFACTURES
IN THE KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND

BOOK II.

CHAPTER V.

TERREAGLES CASTLE.

1715.—It was a summer afternoon of radiant sunshine which cast the shadows of the Castle of Terreagles, in Dumfries, upon the smooth turf of the bowling green, where two children were at play.

Their mother, seated at her embroidered frame in one of the deep bay windows of the castle, looked up from time to time to watch her stout-limbed boy leading a barrow with balls and bowling-pins, and with a tall staff stuck in it, with a handkerchief tied to the top, shouting to his little sister,—

“See, Nan, see! this is the good ship *James the Third*, and there are plenty of cannon balls aboard to cut down the enemy.”

Little Nan trudged after her brother, crying,—

"King James! King James!" and blowing a little penny whistle bought in Dumfries for her by the old serving-man, Walter, at the last fair.

Lady Nithsdale rose from her seat as she saw her husband crossing the turf to the place where the children were at play.

Little Lord Maxwell, breathless with his exertions, sat down on the edge of the terrace which skirted the bowling green, and the Earl of Nithsdale took little Anne in his arms, and seated himself by his boy's side.

Lady Nithsdale looked at the group for a few minutes with a smile on her lips. Where could be found two lovelier children or a nobler father? The scene before her told of domestic love and peace, and the fears that sometimes troubled her as to the Earl's position were at rest.

"I must go and join them," she thought, and calling her waiting-woman she bid her sort the many-coloured silks, as they were in a sad tangle, and put away the work till the next day.

Amy obeyed, saying as she did so,—

"Two horsemen have ridden into the courtyard, my lady, bearing some message to my lord from Edinburgh."

"From Edinburgh!" Lady Nithsdale said. "What can their errand be?"

Amy bent over the tangled silks, and Lady Nithsdale did not wait for an answer. She went hurriedly down the long corridor leading from the withdrawing-room, where she had been at work, and was by the Earl's side just as two men, following his faithful steward, Walter Elliot, approached him.

"Master Macdougall, my lord, desires an audience with you."

The Earl rose, and putting little Nan down by her mother's side, he said, addressing the messenger,—

"What news do you bring me?"

"This, my lord. You will see if you open this paper, which I now hand to you by order of His Majesty's representative at Edinburgh."

"I am His Majesty's dutiful servant," the Earl said haughtily; "of this he is well assured."

"My lord, I am proud to know you have given in your allegiance to the King, George the First, whom may God preserve."

"You mistake, sir. I recognise no sovereign but King James the Third."

The man bowed, his bonnet in his hand.

"Having brought this summons, my lord, I am bound to require an answer."

Then there was silence. Even the children saw by their mother's troubled face that something was wrong. The little Lord Maxwell stood by her, with his hand in hers, casting a defiant glance at the messenger, while Anne clung to her gown, and hid her face in its folds.

Lady Nithsdale was leaning against her husband, and reading the contents of the letter. It was written in clear characters on a bit of parchment, and sealed with the royal arms. It ran thus:—

“Know all present, in the name of George, by the Grace of God, King of this Realm, we summon you, William Maxwell, Earl of Nithsdale, to appear, within seven days, at the High Court, in the City of Edinburgh, to swear allegiance to the said lawful sovereign, George, and to offer bail for your good behaviour; failing this, you are denounced as a rebel against authority, and will be dealt with accordingly.

“Signed on behalf of His Majesty's Government at the Parliament House, this seventh day of July, One thousand, seven hundred and fifteen.

ALEXANDER MACKIE, *Clerk.*”

The Earl turned to the messenger,—

“I will ask you to follow my steward, Walter Elliot, to the hall, where refreshments will be offered you, and he will see that your horse is well stabled till you return to Edinburgh. I must take time to consider my answer, and you shall receive it as soon as I can make known my determination in due form.”

“Return to your play, Will and Nan,” Lady Nithsdale said, “and I will send Janet to you when it is the hour for your supper.”

But little Lord Maxwell stamped his foot, saying,—

“I will stay by you, mother; that bad man brought ill news.”

“Hush, Will!” his mother said, bending over her boy. “Be obedient, and so please me. See, here comes your good nurse Janet, and she will take you down to the river and gather some pretty flowers for me that grow on the bank.”

The boy made no further resistance—his mother’s word was law—but he went up to his father who still stood with the paper in his hand, and said,—

“I say, long live King James, father, and I wish I were a man to fight for him.”

“Poor boy!” the Earl said, laying his hand on

the child's sunny curls, "I fear me you would fight in vain."

Then Lady Winifred put her arm into her husband's, and said in a cheerful voice,—

"Do not be so despondent, my dear lord, sure the right will triumph."

The Earl shook his head. "My sweet one," he said, as they turned towards the house together, "I have sad misgivings about the King; he is, I fear, vacillating and without true courage to carry him through with this struggle, for a struggle it will be, and a bloody one, or I am much mistaken. The King should even now be here in person, putting heart into his faithful followers. Instead, he delays, and the Earl of Mar has received no commission to raise the standard. But I think, nay, I know, my course is clearly marked out for me. I shall send word by this messenger that I desire delay on the plea of ill-health, caused as you too well know, dear wife, by nights of sleepless watching and days of carking care. Yes, I will ask for delay ere I return a definite answer, and perhaps, before many days are over, the King may have come in person to claim his own. Now I would fain be alone while I mature my plans. As soon as I have done so, I will lay them before you, my own sweetheart."

"So be it, my dear lord," Lady Nithsdale said, even then showing the tact and wisdom which characterised her.

She did not weep, and ask to be admitted to her husband's deliberations; she did not trouble him with questions, but leaving him in the old library, where he always transacted the business of his estate and wrote his letters, Lady Nithsdale threw a cloak round her and went to meet her children who were gone to the river bank under Janet's care.

The valley at the head of which Terreagles Castle stood was lying in the full western sunshine. The river Nith was singing a joyous song, as it came rushing over the boulders of its rocky bed.

On the slopes which skirted the valley, sheep were feeding, and beyond lay a line of blue mountains, their outline clear cut against the opal sky.

The tinkle of a cow bell, the murmur of the river, and the voices of children at play in the hamlet just outside the castle grounds, all seemed to tell of peace.

Lady Nithsdale felt its influence, and when after an hour spent with her children listening to their merry prattle, and doing all she could to divert little Lord Maxwell's thoughts from the messenger and

his news, she was ready for her husband when he called her.

Supper was served in the large hall of the castle, and it was not till afterwards that the Earl came with his wife to the room where she generally sat at her books or work, and drawing her down by his side on a couch, and holding her hand in his, he said,—

“My mind is more at rest now, dear heart, and I seem to see my way more plainly before me. I have written to the effect that I beg to be excused from attending the summons, and would fain take the oath in my own house.”

“You told me as much, dear love, two hours ago.”

“Yes, but more is to come; and, I fear me, what I decide will give you pain. It is certain that there will be a war, terrible as it is to think so; brother will raise his sword against brother, father against son. Our poor country will be torn with divisions, and devastated, while the strife lasts. Our children must be sent away to a place of safety, to your sister Lucy in the convent at Bruges, and, my beloved, I think you should accompany them.”

Lady Nithsdale started to her feet, and her face was pale as death, as she said,—

“Never, my dear lord, never! do not bid me leave you. I am yours in life, and, if so it is to be, in death. I could die with you, but I could not leave you. It is hard, ay, it is bitter to part from my children, from *our* children; but they come second to you. If they must be sent away, God will help me to bear it. They will have Janet and Sandy Macpherson, and James Buchanan and his daughter—” then for a moment her courage failed, covering her face with her hands a great sob broke from her.

The Earl took her in his arms and comforted her with many tender words and assurances that he was acting for the best in sending the heir of the house of Nithsdale out of harm’s way.

“As my son, he will be suspected and indicted as a traitor, his inheritance taken from him if I am attainted for high treason, as I surely shall be. He will be far better out of this unhappy country.”

“But you shall not be attainted,” Lady Nithsdale said, quickly rallying from her grief. “The King’s cause will be victorious, and we shall all return hither with joy. Do you not know the words in the Psalter, —“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy,” and you will come again to Nithsdale bearing your sheaves of victory with you.”

The Earl would not say more to dishearten his wife, and they went on to discuss the best way for the transit of the children to Belgium, and it was agreed that Lady Nithsdale should write at once to her sister, and claim a place of safety for her children in the convent at Bruges.

Winifrede, Countess of Nithsdale, was the daughter of the Duke of Powis, a title conferred by King James the Second, and disallowed at the Court of Queen Anne. Her early life had been passed with her sister, Lady Lucy Herbert, at the Augustinian convent at Bruges. Her father having devoted himself to the fallen King, and following him to France, received from James the empty title of Marquis of Montgomery and Duke of Powis.

Thus Lady Nithsdale had seen little of the world. When she left the convent, she came at once to the old Poole Castle in Montgomeryshire, where her mother lived chiefly in retirement. Poole Castle had been for centuries the home of the Herberts, and Lord Powis gladly made his mother welcome to consider it as her own, for he was absent for many months in the year.

Here the gentle girl, Lady Winifrede Herbert, came from the seclusion of her nunnery when scarcely more than fifteen, to hear that her mother had ac-

cepted the Earl of Nithsdale as her suitor. Lady Powis's elder daughter was well married, and Lady Lucy was a professed sister in the convent at Bruges.

Lady Powis having known much of the bitterness of strife, and the unhappy divisions which it caused in families, longed to commit her gentle, youngest daughter into the hands of a good and noble-hearted man.

The Earl of Nithsdale seemed to fulfil all her requirements, and, according to the fashion of the time the whole matter was arranged without consulting her who was most interested in it, and Lady Winifrede was betrothed to the Earl of Nithsdale without delay, and was married to him in due course in the chapel attached to Poole Castle.

The Earl of Nithsdale took his bride to Terragles Castle, and there he began to realise the treasure which he had gained in her.

He was a man of thirty, and had seen much of the world; perhaps for this reason he found delight in the fresh young girl who very soon learned to love him with a passionate devotion, which was to show its strength in a very remarkable manner in later years.

Lady Winifrede was, from all we know of her,

full of life and the enjoyment of life, and she was thus peculiarly suited by natural temperament to brighten Lord Nithsdale, who was given to fits of depression and hopelessness about the cause of the King to whom he had vowed allegiance.

The Earl of Nithsdale was not the only man who, although resolved to stand by the son of the dethroned monarch, and, if called upon to do so, die in his cause, had secret misgivings as to the King for whom such sacrifices were to be made.

James, called by his enemies the Pretender, and by many of his friends in Scotland the Chevalier de St. George, seems to have concentrated in his own person all the weaknesses of his race without the charm which had won for his grandfather, Charles the First, many devoted adherents, who seeing his faults and smarting under them, could yet feel their love for him undying, and counted not their life dear for his sake.

His grandson James, on the contrary, had but little power of attaching his followers to his person, for it is no doubt true that those who sought him, fired with enthusiasm for his cause, often came away disheartened and feeling that they were indeed disappointed.

The night before the children's departure, their

mother went to look at them asleep for the last time.

She had borne up valiantly in their father's presence, had described to her little son all he would see that was new to him—how delightful he would find his Aunt Lucy, and that she would love him and little Anne dearly, for her sake and their own. So cheerful and full of hope Lady Nithsdale seemed, that even her faithful maid, Amy Evans, thought it was wonderful her mistress could part so easily from the children she dearly loved.

Others judged her in the same way; even the Earl was almost deceived, and congratulated himself that the dreaded parting would not affect their mother as painfully as it affected him.

But those who judged Lady Nithsdale thus, little knew what was passing within. It was always the same with her—her own sorrows were never to take precedence of the sorrows of others, and thus she had made it her one aim to cheer her husband under what was to him a grievous trial—to send the young heir of his ancient house away from the house of his ancestors it might be for ever.

But now when Lady Nithsdale softly entered the room where her children lay sleeping, and looked down on their deep, unbroken slumber for the last

time, the long-pent-up grief found vent at last, and throwing himself on her knees by little Lord Maxwell's bed, bitter sobs broke from her.

She felt, as many a mother has felt, that her children, as they were, would never return to her. Safe under her wing, guarded from all harm, the sweetness of their innocent childhood was a perpetual joy to her.

Now they were going amongst strangers, far from her—too young, perhaps, to hold her long in remembrance—too young to think of all she had tried to teach them, and she would become but a dim vision to them instead of a living, speaking reality.

Long did she pray and weep by her boy's bed, wrestling with herself to accept God's will without murmuring, but tried to the uttermost and unable to find comfort.

After some time her grief became calmer, and the strength she had prayed for was given. She was rising from her knees, almost afraid to disturb the sleeper with a kiss, when the child suddenly turned in his sleep and cried,—“Mother! mother!”

“Nay, sweet boy, I am here,” she said.

“Oh! I'm glad. I thought I saw a big man coming to take me away!”

"It was an ugly dream, dear child. There is no man here."

"I expect I was thinking of that bad man who brought father a letter one day—the day I made the ship out of the old barrow. Walter Elliot, when I asked him what the man wanted, said—"He was a bad man, who came to say father was to go to Edinburgh."

"Nay, Will, nay; the man was only doing his duty—he was only doing as he was bid. Dear little son, go to sleep again, and have no more ugly dreams."

"I'll dream of you, my pretty mother. Amy says you are the beautifulest lady in the world, and that Aunt Lucy would be like you if she did not wear an ugly black gown and a white cap which hides all her hair and makes her look old. Amy says she is very grand, though—that an abbess is next to a queen."

"Amy talks nonsense sometimes. You must not heed her always; but listen to me, Will; be very obedient to your aunt, and obliging and full of respect for the good Sisters—many of them may yet remember me. And, Will, take care of little Nan, and remember she is only a little maiden, and that

you being a boy must always give up to her and love her dearly."

"I will," the boy said. "But Nan is a plague sometimes; she broke my sword yesterday, and I—I smacked her."

"Oh, Will, Will, you must never slap your sister. What would father say?"

"I kissed her afterwards, and we made up the quarrel, and," with a sigh, "I promised to give her that little fife Walter Elliot brought from Dumfries Fair; but I really think I *can't*. Perhaps she will forget I promised it, mother."

"But you must keep your promise, my boy; all true-hearted gentlemen keep their word."

The child's eyes were getting heavy with sleep, and with his mother's kisses on his cheek, and the touch of her gentle hand upon his forehead as she smoothed his ruddy curls, little Lord Maxwell fell asleep again, and for the last time under the roof of Terreagles Castle.

Little Nan did not wake as her mother bent over her and kissed her rosy lips, which, parted as she slept, showed two pearls of teeth between them.

"Ah, Father in Heaven, and all good angels, watch over my little Anne, and keep her from the evil of this evil world."

In another moment Lady Nithsdale had left the room so quietly that the children's nurse, who slept in a little chamber opening from the larger one, did not wake.

"The bitterness of the parting is over now," Lady Nithsdale said, as she went along the corridor and reached the head of the winding stone staircase which led from the room where the Earl always sat to transact business with Walter Elliot.

She found the Earl with a quantity of papers and letters before him.

He looked up at her entrance, and when she asked if she could help him, he shook his head.

"No, sweetheart, no; I am destroying some papers that might be seized, and be to my disadvantage when this house is in the hands of the Government."

"Why will you speak of that as a certainty, my dear lord, which is a remote possibility? I feel so sanguine of success when the struggle comes. Nay, do not look so sad, and turn away from me."

"Poor child!" the Earl said, for there was always in his tenderness for his wife something of the father as well as the husband. "My poor little Winifrede! she has need of all her faith and hope to bear her

up. I will not destroy them. Come, let us leave the papers and take a turn on the terrace, where the moon is shedding its silver light, and all is peace and calm, as if there were no such things on the earth as sadness and sorrow."

The children departed the next day. When it came to the last, Lady Nithsdale had indeed, as the Earl said, need of all her faith and hope for the future, for little Nan clung to her, and cried again that she would not go without her mother.

And even little Lord Maxwell, though trying to be brave, was strangling his sobs, returning twice from the steps of the great, lumbering coach, which was to take the whole party to Dumfries, to throw his arms round his mother, and unable to utter anything but the one word—"Mother!"

The Earl turned away with such a look of stern, hopeless grief in his face that Lady Nithsdale dried her tears, which she could not restrain at the last moment, and putting her arm within his, said,—

"The children will soon be happy; they are under good care. They are too young to grieve long, and our boy is so full of sense, and Nan will ere long be her own merry little self; and the day will come when we shall hear both their happy voices echoing

in the hall as they patter upstairs to find their own old rooms ready for them."

But the Earl refused to be comforted. He fell to reproaching himself for depriving, as he said, his son of his lawful inheritance, and driving him forth at his tender age to exile and dependence on the charity of others.

"No Earl of Nithsdale will ever live here again. The place will know us no more."

"Dearest love," Lady Nithsdale ventured to say, "is it wise to forecast trouble that may never come? Harken! there is the sound of the bagpipe. It seems to tell of hope and success. The brave Highlanders can fight for their King to its sound, and they will gain the victory."

"Ah! Winifrede, you cannot understand how mixed are my feelings. Gladly, yes gladly, I would resign all if I felt I could secure my country's good by the restoration of my King."

"But sure you have no doubts on that score?"

"I have my doubts, into which I cannot enter now. I am pledged to the cause, and it is not in me to draw back. Do not fear that I shall fail, Winifrede; I will fight as a soldier should for his King."

"And you will not fight in vain, rest assured of

that; so let us have no more gloomy forebodings, dear heart, but believe we shall hear these halls ringing with the sound of many voices crying, 'Long live our rightful King, James the Eighth!'"

CHAPTER VI.

DEFEAT AND IMPRISONMENT.

THE necessity for action was over for Lady Nithsdale. She had seen her husband ride away from his home with four trusty followers on his way to Dilstone Castle, to confer with one of the most noble and heroic of the Jacobite leaders—the Earl of Derwentwater.

From Dilstone, a messenger arrived bearing a letter from the Earl to his wife. It was but ill news, for the death of Louis the Fourteenth, and “the Regent’s” refusal to assist James with men, arms and money, had struck terror into the hearts of the Scotch Jacobites.

Lord Mar had raised King James’s standard at Braemar, and everyone felt there was no possible retreat now. The matter must be carried through, whatever was the risk, or however disastrous might be the final result.

The Earl of Nithsdale, although from the first hopeless of ultimate success, was conspicuous for the

steadfastness he showed when many hearts were full of misgivings. The Scotch nobles and gentry were in several cases actuated by selfish motives, hoping that when King James was in possession of the throne their position would be improved and their fortunes retrieved, but Lord Nithsdale had no sordid or selfish motives. He was true to his colours, and did his utmost to inspire others with his own brave determination to fight for what he believed to be the rightful cause.

At last, by strenuous efforts, Lord Mar raised an army of ten thousand men, and receiving the commission from the King, he read it aloud at the head of each regiment as General-in-Chief of the Scottish forces, and an address, signed by many names carrying weight with them, was despatched to James, praying him to lose no time in coming to Scotland, where he was eagerly longed for.

As is usual in wars like this which was now imminent, there was discord and division where there ought to have been unity.

The English Jacobites insisted that it was necessary for the Scotch army to cross the border, while the undisciplined Highlanders declared they would fight on their own soil, and would not set foot in England.

Dumfries was in the hands of the Government, and Lady Nithsdale was obliged to live in complete retirement, not knowing what a day would bring forth. She was disturbed by rumours of every kind, which were constantly brought to the castle; and, if believed one day, were contradicted the next.

This time of uncertainty and suspense was infinitely harder for Lady Nithsdale than any that had preceded it, or was to follow it.

Separated from her husband and children, she tried to possess her soul in patience, but a sense of loneliness and desolation oppressed her.

She longed for the dawn of every day, in the hope of better tidings; and after restless, sleepless nights, could only take up her position at the deep bay window, from which she had looked out on her children at play, and try to employ herself in making garments for her poor neighbours, and reading books in which she might find comfort.

Lady Nithsdale daily grew more wan and pale—her light step grew slow and weary—her whole nature seemed changed.

“It is suspense, Amy, that I find so hard to bear. If only I could do something for my lord,” Lady Nithsdale said one morning, when Amy, her faithful maid, came to her with a cup of wine and a plate

of biscuits, entreating her to take some nourishment, urging,—

“If you go on thus, my lady, there will be nothing left of you when my lord returns. You grow thinner every day. Walter Elliot says his heart aches to see you.”

“Poor Walter; I know I have a faithful friend in him and in you, Amy. So, to please you, I will swallow the wine and try to eat a biscuit, though it will go near to choke me.”

Amy was delighted, and said in her simple way,—

“For the sake of my lord and the children, you should eat and drink. Then, if any need arose you would be strong and ready.”

“Strong and ready for what?”

“To join my lord at Court when all this trouble is over. And here comes Walter with a packet in his hand bearing good news.”

It was a large, thick packet, but when she had read what it had contained, Lady Nithsdale said,—

“No good news, Amy. My lord’s wise counsels are overruled. Instead of taking possession of Dumfries, Glasgow and Stirling, the troops, and, alas! some of their leaders, persist in making for the border to join the army of English Jacobites. The whole

force is in disorder, my lord says—all will be leaders and none led; but he also says, whether his counsels are followed or not, he will never desert the cause. He and Lord Derwentwater are true men, noble men. God preserve them both!”

After this news there was a long interval. Then came the battle of Sheriffmuir, and Lady Nithsdale's hopes revived. In her eyes it was a glorious victory, but not in the eyes of many better qualified to judge.

It cost the life of the young and noble Clanronald, who fought with a courage worthy of his race, of whom it is said they were ever first on the field and the last to leave it.

And now Lady Nithsdale's buoyant spirit rose again, and carried her through the next few weeks. One victory meant others. The army in England would be victorious, and she began to be far more like herself, attending to the wants of her household, and day by day going to the Earl's study to arrange everything as she thought he would like to find it. She ordered two of his favourite pictures to be removed to his room. She was daily waiting now, she said, for the news from England. It was long in coming, but though it tarried, she waited for it in hope.

Neither of her faithful servants shared in this hope, but they were only too thankful to see their mistress's improved state of health, and to hear her voice again singing snatches of songs, and going about the house with a smile and pleasant word for all her dependents. They had not the heart to dash her hopes to the ground by repeating the rumours which from time to time reached Nithsdale from Dumfries.

They were stories of defeat and diminished forces on the Jacobite side; of deserters, who were traitors in the camp; of the difficulties and dangers which beset those who remained faithful.

As Dumfries was in the hands of the Government, tidings were delayed, and Lady Nithsdale again relapsed into the state of miserable uncertainty and suspense from which, after the victory of Sheriffmuir, she had roused herself, and fed on hopes which were never realised.

At last there was news which could not be hidden any longer. The battle of Preston had been a disastrous defeat, and the Jacobite leaders had been forced to surrender.

The days were short and dark, and winter set in with unusual severity. The hills were covered with snow, and bitter blasts blew up the valley of

the Nith, sending fierce storms of hail and snow against the casements of the castle.

Day after day Lady Nithsdale paced through the spacious rooms and corridors of the castle with her hands clasped, and her whole heart filled with prayers for the safety of the Earl.

One evening she was sitting alone in the large hall, where a huge fire of peat and wood was blazing on the open hearth, lost in thought, and hoping against hope that tidings would soon come.

It was so hard to hear nothing, still harder to have to sit with folded hands and do nothing. To her brave, energetic nature this was the hardest part of her trial, for of Lady Nithsdale it may be said—her love for her husband was so deep and true that her highest joy was to serve him.

And now as she sat in almost helpless despondency in the old oaken chair, on the back of which was carved the arms of the Maxwells, surmounted by a coronet, Walter Elliot came hastily into the hall.

“My lady, a messenger has arrived, a rough, boorish man, who says he has a letter from my lord, which he will not deliver up without a recompence.”

“Let him have it, let him have gold if he will,

only give me the letter, good Walter, for I cannot wait."

In spite of the efforts of the other servants to prevent his doing so, the man forced his way into the hall.

He spoke in the broad Lancashire dialect, which Lady Nithsdale could scarcely understand.

"Yes," he said, "I've the letter from one of the lords, who is a prisoner, and whose head is, like enough, struck off by now."

"Stop him! stop him!" Lady Nithsdale cried, rising from her seat. "Give him what he wants—two pieces of gold, if needs be."

"Ay, and a good supper to boot," the man said, and—"hands off! hands off!" he exclaimed, "or I'll show you what an Englishman can do with his fists."

"Hold your peace, you varlet, and hand me the letter."

"Not till you put the gold into my palm; my motto is, 'Get all you can, and keep all you get.'"

During this altercation Lady Nithsdale's agony of suspense had become unbearable.

"Give the man the two gold pieces—three—four—only let me have the letter."

"There, you hear what your lady saith. I'd as

you

lief have three gold pieces as two. She'll make a pretty widow, I'll warrant."

And now Lady Nithsdale's natural dignity and determination conquered for the moment her dire anxiety.

She went up to the man, who was trying to get free from Walter Elliot's strong grasp, and said, in a firm, decided tone,—

"Give me the letter you bear from my lord the Earl of Nithsdale, and I will see you are properly rewarded. Make no more ado, but do as I command you."

The man, rough and untaught as he was, acknowledged the power which this lady exercised over him.

He drew the leather pouch from beneath his jerkin, where it had been fastened by a strong belt, and taking out the letter, he put it, without another word, into Lady Nithsdale's hand.

"It was a journey I'd not care to take again," he muttered; "for maybe if it is found out that I came from a rebel lord, I should find myself in a pretty plight."

"Take the money and begone," Walter Elliot said, as he saw Lady Nithsdale press the letter to her lips, saying to Amy,—

"A lamp! Light a lamp at once! I cannot read the letter by the flickering flame of the fire."

"Will you not come to your own chamber, my lady? There is a lamp there and a good fire kindled, and you will be undisturbed there."

"Yes, yes; lift the arras and let us go thither at once. Ah me! though I long to read what my lord has written, I dread it! dread it! for that man said he was a prisoner. Think of that, Amy—a prisoner, it may be, in fetters. But no, I cannot believe they would dare to bind one whose word is his bond. Fetters! ah, it is impossible that my lord should be manacled like a felon."

Amy left her mistress to read the precious letter, and retired into an adjoining closet where she slept, to be near her dear mistress in the night.

An hour had passed before Amy heard her mistress call her.

"Come and stand by me," Lady Nithsdale said, "while I tell you what my lord says. Alas! it is a story of ill success from first to last. It was a fierce fight at Preston, and our countrymen were the last to yield. They fired the town, but the men fought, as brave as lions, by the light of the burning buildings. The English were for submission, but not so the gallant Scots. They rushed on to meet their

death. Now, hearken, Amy, my lord desires me, if possible, to see our King, and by God's help I will do so. You must get Walter Elliot and two of the serving-men to go with us, and I will do my lord's bidding."

"Dear madam, I fear you will overtax your strength, and what good results do you expect?"

"Do not speak like that, Amy. Am I not bound in all things to do what my lord wishes? Hearken to what he says,—“When a cause is hopeless, is a commander justified in wasting the lives of those under his command? It is true that we, Kenmure, myself, and Traquair, and, above all, Derwentwater may choose death rather than life, but have we a right to sport with the lives of others? It is this,” my lord goes on, “that I would fain have my wife convey to the King with my dutiful respects and undying devotion to his cause.”

“Yes,” Lady Nithsdale continued, “as soon as I hear that His Majesty has landed in Scotland, I shall start without a moment's delay; so be ready, Amy, for my resolve is taken.”

Amy could only say that she would do her mistress's bidding, secretly hoping that there would be no necessity for the journey, for the King had not

yet come, might never come, and then Lady Nithsdale would not undertake the journey.

"My lord says," Lady Nithsdale continued, "many sweet and loving words, which no eye must see but mine. Whenever he is allowed to do so, he says he will summon me to his presence. We are not to think of him, Amy, in a damp, dark dungeon, with irons and chains. The prisoners are well treated—that is some comfort; but whither they will be taken is not yet known. But let us thank God, Amy, for His goodness in suffering me to have direct tidings from my lord. Methinks we were somewhat rough to the bearer of the letter. Run, Amy, and see to it that he is well cared for and given a comfortable bed for the night."

Lady Nithsdale's was by nature the light heart that lives long, and with her husband's precious letter at her breast, she slept peacefully that night, little dreaming how all her courage would soon be needed, and that she had but taken the first steps in the rough and troubled path which lay before her.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE WAY TO THE TOWER.

"NEWS! news! great news!" Awdry Chenery cried, as she came dancing into Michael Paston's shop and inquired of Jack Barnby for Christian.

Jack nodded his head towards the door leading to the parlour and said,—

"You'd best not make much of the news in there, for the old master is pretty bad, and he has heard your news, I expect, without your telling of it."

"The battle of Preston, you mean, of course—all the world knows about that—and how the poor Jacobites got their deserts."

"How do you know it was their deserts—eh? Like as not they are better men than their enemies. I'm for justice," Jack Barnby said, with a wise shake of his head. "And, Lord! when I saw King George skulking across Kensington Gardens t'other Sunday I thought he wasn't worth making a row about. If he went back to Germany, who'd care? And

those women along with him are the ugliest I ever looked on."

Jack Barnby rather enjoyed talking to Awdry, and looking at her pretty face, with its roses and lilies, and the sparkle and defiant look in her blue eyes as she said,—

"You are a fool for your pains, Jack Barnby, and you should keep your notions to yourself, or may be you'll get into trouble."

"Well, p'r'aps you are right, Mistress Awdry—but what's your big news, eh?"

"Ah," she said, "you sha'n't know it now. I shall go and tell it to Christian."

"Come, now, don't be uncivil, Awdry, when you know a frown spoils your pretty face. I'd like to snatch a kiss—there, now will you tell me?"

"I'd box your ears first, Master Impudence," was the reply.

"Ay, and how often have you boxed Master Mills's for the same offence?"

Awdry's manner changed at once.

"Nay, cease your joking, Jack. Harry has been gone a year and no news of him. My heart mis-gives me that I shall never see him again."

"Well, take up with another suitor, then; you've scores of 'em, I'll warrant."

But Awdry sighed, and said,—

“You don’t know what you are talking about, so good-day, Master Barnby.”

“The news; you’ve not told the news, Awdry.”

“No, Master Curiosity, and you won’t hear it from me.”

She was all smiles and banter again now, as she opened the parlour door and called,—

“Christian, here’s news!”

Christian held up her hand and pointed to the large chair, where old Michael was sleeping heavily.

“Hush! do not wake him—speak softly—he has scarce slept to-night.”

“Christian, the prisoners are coming in from Highgate before dark to-day. I want to see how they look. Will you come along with me?”

“No, indeed, Awdry; it is ill-chosen amusement to stare at the unfortunate.”

“Master Llewellyn will be there; how I wish I could find him, and he would take care of me. Christian, are you ever going to marry Master Llewellyn?” Awdry asked, turning away, as was her custom, from one subject to another abruptly.

“Not that I know of,” was the answer.

"He is your devoted slave, but a sly one, too, or he wouldn't keep back that he is a sworn foe to the Jacobites."

"Do you suppose he keeps it back from me?" Christian said.

"Well, the old master hasn't a notion of it, or he'd never let him set foot in the house; that's the truth, now, isn't it, Christian?"

"Yes; why disturb his few remaining days with controversy. I keep him quiet and free from trouble as far as in me lies. Dear father," she said, as the old man moved restlessly in his chair, and, half awake, asked,—

"Who is here, Christian?"

"Only Awdry Chenery, father!"

"A saucy miss, though a pretty one," the old man said, with a feeble smile. "What's the news, Christian?"

"There is not much news, father," and Christian signed to Awdry to be silent.

"Have they rallied the forces, or are they tamely content to be beaten?"

"I do not hear of any further rally," Christian said; "our friends were routed at Preston, and it will be best for them to bide their time before making another stand."

"Bide their time! ay, that's the watchword of cowards; yet sure those gallant men, Derwentwater and Kenmure and Nithsdale, will never be content to let the usurper hold his ill-gotten throne without another struggle to wrest it from him. Get the books, Christian, and let us read. I can see no customers to-day. Let us have Will Shakespeare's "Richard the Third," and hear how a usurper met his deserts—as may George meet his."

Michael's eyes, dim as they were with age, blazed out with a fierce light as he mentioned the King's name. And he was but one instance of the bitterness of party feeling, which, if smouldering, was ready at any moment to kindle into a flame.

Awdry, who dearly loved a compliment to her beauty, whether from young or old, now came up to Master Paston's chair, and making a pretty curtsy, took his long, withered hand in hers and kissed it.

"I am glad to find you faring better to-day, sir."

"Better! better! No, child. The sands of life are running out, as they run in yonder hour-glass, only there is no power to replenish them. Maybe it is time for true-hearted men to be gone where, beyond all this falsehood and treachery, there is peace."

Christian made another sign to Awdry to leave

the room, and kissing her hand and waving it in good-bye, Awdry tripped away home.

"I will go and find Mistress Mills, mother. Mayhap she and Master Mills will be ready to go to see the prisoners come into town."

"Well, if you must go, you must," Mistress Chenery said; "don't you get trampled to death in the crowd, that's all. I can't leave the shop to gad about, though I'd be pleased enough to see the traitors brought in, but some of 'em will be brought by the river to the Tower. Won't that content you, Awdry?"

"No, I'd like to see them ride in. Let me go, mother!"

Mrs. Chenery never had any authority over Awdry. It was the old story of a spoilt child getting her own way, however much she was in the wrong. So Awdry was soon off to the Mills's house, a little scared at the crowd collecting in the streets, and much relieved when she felt her hand taken, and heard David Llewellyn's voice.

"Mistress Awdry, sure it is a risk for you to be out alone in the crowd. Let me take you home."

"No, no; I am on my way to Mrs. Mills. I want to see the prisoners come in, Master Llewellyn,

do, I pray you, help me to a good place on their route."

David Llewellyn's nature was too noble to take pleasure in the fall of brave men, and though, on principle, he had rejoiced to hear of the defeat at Preston, he hated to hear of the indignities heaped upon the leaders of the rebellion, of which news had reached London, with the information that they would be brought in to Newgate and the Tower before sunset that day.

The crowd thickened, and David felt the care of Awdry a great responsibility.

"You cannot see aught, Mistress Awdry, and, forsooth, what there is to see will be a sorry spectacle. Let me strive to get you back to London Bridge."

"Oh no; do, I pray you, help me to go forward!"

A man who was next them, elbowing through the crowd, attracted by Awdry's pretty face and pleading voice, said to David,—

"Look you, master! If you can get to yon wooden palings, you may lift this pretty little mistress of yours on the top of 'em, and you can stand below with me; for, judging by the hubbub, the lords can't be far off."

David, though heartily wishing he had not fallen in with Awdry, and thus had her in charge in the increasing tumult, took the man's advice, and, pressed on. The palings were reached, and Awdry, delighted to have accomplished her desire in the face of opposition, was lifted above the heads of the throng—David and his companion setting their backs firmly against the palings, and resisting, as well as they could, the pressure of the crowd.

But now there was a general stoppage in the stream of people. The constables were clearing the road right and left, and the plumes and helmets of a large detachment of horse guards and grenadiers were seen approaching. Then, above the trampling of the horses' hoofs and the clatter of arms, rose the hoarse sound of an angry multitude, shouting and crying in discordant voices to the beating of warming-pans, which might well make the horses curvet and prance, as those in the rear of the detachment of soldiers came on. The beating of the warming-pans brought loud, ribald laughter from the bystanders. It was considered an excellent joke, and within the open lid of one, borne in the front of the crowd, was a wooden figure of a baby—a rudely-carved doll dressed in woollen garments, and a placard attached to it, in large letters,—

"THE PRETENDER IN HIS CRADLE."

And now even the coarse jokes and laughter which had greeted the procession of warming-pans were hushed as the prisoners rode slowly through the pathway cleared for them, their hands tied with cords, and on the neck of each sorry steed a halter was slung, a soldier walking at its bridle-rein.

They came on, those unhappy men—Nithsdale, Derwentwater, Kenmure, Widdrington and Nairne—some of them with bowed heads and dejected mien, for very shame of this humiliation in the face of an excited and furious rabble. It was just by the place where Awdry was lifted high above the heads of the crowd that a halt was made.

General Forster and the less important of the prisoners were here separated from the lords, to be conveyed to Newgate or the Marshalsea and Fleet prisons, while Lords Nithsdale, Kenmure and Derwentwater were to be sent to the Tower.

What a parting it was! and yet not a word could these brave men exchange with each other nor bid what, in many cases, was to be an eternal farewell.

Amongst all the prisoners, Lord Nithsdale was conspicuous. He sat erect on his miserable steed as

if on his own gallant charger ready for battle. His eyes flashed defiance on the mob, and he smiled scornfully at a man, bolder than the rest, who poured a flood of scurrilous abuse upon him and played a tattoo on a warming-pan under the horse's nose.

The soldiers thrust him back, and he fell heavily, and was only rescued from being trampled to death with great difficulty by some of his companions.

"Who is it?" Awdry said—"is that grand man a traitor?"

"Ay, that he is, and it's a thousand pities he should lend himself to the wrong cause," David answered.

"But who is it? Tell me his name?"

"The Earl of Nithsdale," the man said, who had befriended Awdry, by helping to lift her on to the place she occupied on the palings.

"The Earl of Nithsdale! I am so sorry for him," Awdry said. "I could cry to think of his going to prison."

The sweet young voice pronouncing his name, as Lord Nithsdale sat waiting for the next move, made him turn his head in the direction from which the voice came.

Perhaps something in Awdry's fresh young

beauty, and the tender, pitying tone in her voice sent the Earl's thoughts back to the far-off time when Lady Winifrede Herbert was presented to him by her mother as his future bride.

The whole expression of his face changed, and the lips which had a moment before curled with such utter contempt, parted in a sad smile.

Involuntarily he would have raised his arm to doff his plumed cap in acknowledgment of Awdry's words.

But his hand felt powerless, for his arms were tightly bound with cords, and bowing his head with courtly grace, he said in tones which sounded for many a day in Awdry's ears,—

“Thanks, gentle maiden, for your kindly words.”

“Oh!” Awdry exclaimed, as the forward march began, and the Lords passed out of sight, “take me home, Master Llewellyn. How can they treat that grand and noble gentleman so ill? I cannot bear to think of it—I wish I hadn't come,” and poor little Awdry's eyes filled with tears.

There was a rush now in the crowd; some following the prisoners to Newgate, others the Lords on their way to the Tower.

The air was bitterly cold, and the sky clear and

crimson in the West, for the short December day was closing in.

David bid Awdry be patient till the throng had dispersed, and then lifting her down from her seat, he made his way with her towards home.

But on London Bridge there were many passing to and fro, and the spaces between the houses were filled with people who were eager to see the Government barge shoot the bridge on its way to the Tower with the prisoners on board.

"I would fain go and watch with Christian," Awdry said, as her mother, in a state of triumphant excitement, bawled to her to come with her to a neighbour's house on the side looking towards the Tower that she might see the traitors going to meet their deserts.

"Oh! mother, don't speak so; they are gallant gentlemen, and it's a shame to ill-use them."

"Stop your prating, child, or you'll get into trouble. I'm not going to have you turn into a Jacobite. I'll feed you on bread and water, and shut you up in the garret first! Master Llewellyn must be sick of you."

"I am going to Christian Paston," Awdry said. "I don't choose to come with you, mother."

"You are an impudent baggage," and Mistress

Chenery, angry that this altercation should have been heard by the neighbour who had invited her into her house, and was growing impatient, gave Awdry a sharp box on the ear, and said, "Have your own way, but I'll make you repent it."

Awdry only laughed, and said to David,—

"Mother will forget all about it soon enough, and kiss me and give me a new riband before bedtime."

"I am afraid, Mistress Awdry, you get your own way too much and too often," David said quietly.

"I dare say that's true, Master Llewellyn; but you know my way is often a pleasant one, and other folk's ways are disagreeable."

"Take heed that your own way isn't full of thorns and prickles some day, Mistress Awdry."

"Are you sick of me, as mother said? Are you sorry you had care of me, to see that sad spectacle?"

Awdry was irresistible in her coaxing moods; and what could David say, but tell her he was glad he had got her home safe and sound, and that he would leave her now under Mistress Paston's care.

"Come in, come in with me. Why not? Have you and Christian quarrelled?"

"No; but we differ in our opinions, and I feel as though I had no right to frequent Master Paston's house when I hold views so opposed to his, and, for

that matter, to hers. Master Paston is failing visibly, and it would ill become me to disturb his latter days by declaring my allegiance to the King, of whom he thinks only as a usurper. So good even to you, Mistress Awdry."

CHAPTER VIII.

ALONG THE SILENT HIGHWAY.

"CHRISTIAN!" Awdry exclaimed, as she went into the parlour, "the prisoners are to pass under the bridge to the Tower. Let us watch for them. I have seen them all enter the town. Master Llewellyn took care of me and lifted me on a paling high above the crowd. I did feel so sorry for them, and more especially for one—the Earl of Nithsdale—he is wondrous handsome, and," with a little laugh, "I'm turned Jacobite for his sake."

"Hush, Awdry!" for Michael roused himself from the dreamy half-consciousness which was now his usual condition, and fixing his eyes on Awdry, said,—

"Who talks of turning Jacobite? What! is it you, little Awdry? Well said! well said! And when the King comes we will rejoice together."

"I have seen the prisoners, sir, and I grieve for noble men tied with cords like thieves and wicked

folk; and they are to pass under the bridge to the Tower in the barge, and I—”

“Help me to the casement, Awdry. Give me my staff. Open the lattice that I may let them know they have a friend above their heads. Quick, Christian! quick!”

“It will be too much for you, father, to tax your strength thus,” Christian said.

And, indeed, she was in some fear of the consequences if her father should raise his voice with the cry of “Long live our rightful King James!” But as she hesitated, he grew angry and excited.

“Do as I bid you, Christian. Get Barnby to come; get Nancy. I will take my place by the casement.”

“Dear father,” Christian said, “I only fear for you if the lattice is open. The cold is very great to-day.”

“If you disobey me, Christian, I must e’en help myself.”

Then with a great effort, gasping for breath, the old man raised himself from the chair, and would have fallen, had not Christian and Awdry put their arms round him to steady him.

At last, breathless and exhausted, he was placed in the deep bay of the window, which was raised a

step from the floor of the room, and had cushioned seats round it.

"Open the lattice," Michael Paston said.

There seemed no other course than to obey, and then the three watchers waited in silence for the appearance of the Government barge bearing the prisoners to the Tower.

The sky was clear and the sun had gone down, leaving an after-glow which, reflected in the broad waters of the Thames, touched them with a faint crimson.

There was the stillness of the coming frost in the air; not a breath stirred the waters below the bridge, and the spectators who thronged the openings and lined the banks made no sound.

At length a low, ominous groan came, borne upon the air, with hisses, which grew louder and then died away.

For there is a thrill of pity for fallen foes, which stirs in the hearts of most Englishmen, and as the Government barge shot the arches of London Bridge there was silence, which might be felt, broken by one voice, tremulous with age and emotion,—

"My blessing on you, my lords, and long live King James."

The words reached the ears of the prisoners at

the stern of the barge, guarded on either side by soldiers.

Lord Nithsdale turned his head and looked up. The three figures at the lattice caught his eye, as the voice reached his ear, and he said to Lord Derwentwater,—

“Take courage; we are not without friends.”

The three watchers at the casement strained their eyes till the barge had passed through the Traitor’s Gate, and then Christian, laying her hand gently on her father’s bowed head, said,

“They are gone now, dear father; all that we can do is to pray for them, and forgive those who have brought them to this sad plight.”

“God help them!” the old man said, “for they will never see the face of friend or kindred again, never be welcomed by wife or child. Have I not in my long life seen many a prisoner pass through that fateful gate, to be lost to sight till they were butchered on Tower Hill? Help me back to my chair, child, for my heart sinks within me, and my time is short.”

It was on the 10th of December 1715 that the Lords were sent to the Tower, and it was on the 22d of the same month that the Prince who had been but a name to many of his followers, arrived in Scotland. He came when dismay, after the defeat

at Preston, filled every heart. The Earl of Mar saw, day by day, defaulters from his army, and amongst those who still retained their allegiance there was a general sense of depression, not to say despair, which fell like a cloud on the gallant men who were risking life and fortune for the son of James the Seventh, as the dethroned King was always styled in Scotland.

But those who went to kiss the Prince's hand and declare their undying loyalty, were even more discouraged than before.

James was in bad health, and his address to the "Privy Council," which had assembled, was not likely to raise the spirits of his followers.

He spoke of the misfortunes which had followed him from the cradle to that hour, and said he knew that his enemies would do their best to bring about the ruin of his cause.

The Earl of Mar did his utmost to summon from far and near the chiefs who had withdrawn their support, wearied out with waiting for the King's appearance; but he failed to bring them back—none took any heed of his message.

In the Castle of Terreagles the news of the King's arrival was received with joy by Lady Nithsdale.

Her heart beat with hopeful anticipation, and she

instantly called her faithful servant, Walter Elliot, and bid him prepare all things in readiness for a journey to Perth, on her way to the old Palace of Scone, where James was holding his little Court.

Walter Elliot was always ready to do his mistress's bidding; but he looked grave as he said,—

“Dear lady, will you be able to bear the weariness of the journey? The country lies desolate betwixt here and Perth, and it will be rough travelling.”

“Were it fraught with danger, Walter, think you I should be discouraged? Were your lord here, would he not be the first to repair to Scone and swear fealty to the King? And shall I draw back?”

All the spirit and energy which had been lying dormant, rose to the occasion, and Lady Nithsdale was so full of hope that in some way or other an interview with the King would work well for her husband, that her servants, when they saw her eyes, so often dim with tears, shining with enthusiasm, and saw her eager to start, had not the heart to discourage her.

So they set forth in the dim dawn of a December morning—a small party of trusty servants, with Elliot at their head, Lady Nithsdale and Amy riding on a pillion saddle—towards Perth.

It was not long before Lady Nithsdale's hopes began to die within her.

James had ordered the destruction by fire of every hamlet and village in the district. The countryside was a scene of desolation, and the ruins of many homesteads stood out in dark contrast to the snow which lay on the ground and clothed the barren waste with its pure garment.

Lady Nithsdale's short-lived enthusiasm for the King was over when she heard that it was by his order all this ruin had been caused. Her own troubles now asserted themselves—her noble husband a prisoner, her children far away from her, herself left lonely and sorrowful in the home which had once been so happy and peaceful.

Lady Nithsdale passed a sleepless night in a hostel in Perth, that fair city of the north, with the Tay now flecked with blocks of ice lying round it; and early on the following morning, attended by Walter Elliot, she rode to the Palace of Scone.

There was but little ceremony observed in the desolate old palace, and before she was aware of it, Lady Nithsdale found herself in one of the low-roofed rooms of the palace, and heard her name announced by a gentleman-in-waiting by the door, as Winifrede, Countess of Nithsdale.

The Earl of Mar who was standing in one of the bay windows overlooking the flat country which stretched between the palace and the river, said at once to the King, with whom he was holding a consultation,—

“Your Majesty must permit me to present to you the wife of one of your devoted subjects, William Maxwell, Earl of Nithsdale, now a prisoner in the Tower of London.”

Poor Lady Nithsdale, overcome with emotion and with grief at finding the King in such a bare, desolate place, could scarcely raise her eyes to his face, but with her wonted grace dropped on her knees and kissed the hand he held out to her, raising her at the same time from the ground, and telling her he was well satisfied to see one who represented in her person the two noble families of Herbert and Maxwell—the one English, the other Scotch—who had ever proved loyal subjects to his ancestors and now to himself.

It was well said, and yet the tone and manner were cold and unsympathetic.

The pale, melancholy-looking man before her, with a stiff, unbending manner, his face marked with the lines of suffering, was so different from the ideal of the King which from her early girlhood Lady

Nithsdale had cherished, that her eyes filled with tears as the former asked in a formal manner,—

“Have you any news of your husband?”

“I have, sir, only once had tidings from him since he has been a prisoner.”

“Ah, we would hope that your good lord’s health does not suffer from confinement.”

“My lord did not complain of any privation or hardship.” But she added, “He is never wont to complain, and he would, I know well, willingly suffer for the cause of his King.”

“Ah!” James said, “if my memory serves me, I had an interview with the Earl in Flanders. I was ill with the same ague which is now rendering me unfitted for action, when action is imperatively needed.” James sighed as he spoke, and asked presently,—“Is the Earl’s castle far from hence?”

“May it please your Majesty, I have made my journey from my husband’s Castle of Terreagles, near Dumfries.”

“We hope you will not suffer from the journey in this horrible weather,” and the King shuddered. “If this frost lasts, the Tay yonder will soon be frozen over and be no longer a defence,” he said, turning to the Earl of Mar. “All things are against me. I am doomed to misfortune.”

"Nay, your Majesty must not say so," Lord Mar replied. He had been much tried by the constant complaints and melancholy forebodings in which James indulged. "We must hope for a turn in fortune's tide, and take it when it comes bravely, with courage born of resolute determination to succeed."

The King yawned, sinking back in his chair, and the Earl of Mar signed to Lady Nithsdale that her interview was at an end.

She made a respectful curtsey, and retired over the uneven floor backwards, thus acknowledging the presence of her sovereign.

But, alas! how her heart sank within her as she confessed to herself, though not to her faithful servants, that her idol had fallen from its pedestal; and that the King she had just left, with his sad, dejected bearing and querulous voice, would never kindle the enthusiasm of his followers, but, in many cases like her own, extinguish any faint sparks of loyal devotion which might be left. "And for him my own noble husband is in prison; for his sake the country is desolate, and children fatherless, and widows weeping. Alack that it should be so! and it is too late to draw back now."

CHAPTER IX.

A LONG JOURNEY.

"AMY!" Lady Nithsdale exclaimed, starting up from her pillow, after a restless night two days after her return from Perth, "we must lose no time; I am going to London."

"My dear lady, you will kill yourself. See how weary you have been since we returned from Scone. And what is that journey when compared with one to London? You must not do it!"

"*Must* not is no word to pass between me and you, Evans. Assist me at once in my toilette, and as soon as I have breakfasted call hither Walter Elliot."

Whenever Lady Nithsdale addressed her faithful Amy as Evans, she knew that she had offended her.

"I crave pardon, my dear lady. It is because I love you so well; it is because my heart is nearly broke," and poor Amy burst into tears.

"Do not be so weak-hearted, Amy. While you

are dressing my hair, I will tell you why I am determined to start for London at once."

"The snow lies deep on the ground, my lady—the frost is sharper than ever."

"Were the snow ten times deeper than it is, were the frost ten times keener, I should go; and if you are reasonable I will tell you why. In one of my troubled dreams last night, I heard my lord's voice calling me by name, and saying, "Come to me," again and again. And then I awoke and looked around, expecting to see him by my bed. Alas! it was a vain expectation, but I obey the call, and I will start on the morrow. If you love me, Amy, you will help, not hinder me by foolish tears and sighs."

Poor Amy did her best to assume a cheerfulness she did not feel, and after completing her lady's toilette, she was leaving the room to call Walter Elliot, when she met him at the door.

"A letter—have you a letter, Walter?"

"Yes, madam, arrived by special messenger from the Duke of Montrose."

"Ah, give it to me," Lady Nithsdale said. "I hoped it might be from my lord, but it may have news of him."

With trembling fingers Lady Nithsdale cut the

silk which tied the letter, sealed with the arms of Montrose, and then she became so absorbed in its contents that, with the tact which was the outcome of his absolute devotion to his mistress, Walter made a sign to Amy to leave the room with him.

The Duchess of Montrose's letter was full of affectionate concern for her cousin, for there was a double connection between the houses of Nithsdale and Montrose. The Duchess was well known in the gay world for her beauty and wit, and her dress was considered the mode, and copied by many fair ladies, who showed the truth of the old saying that "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery."

The Duke and Duchess of Montrose, though strong adherents of the new King, and staunch Protestants, never allowed the difference of opinion to disturb their friendship with the Earl of Nithsdale, still less with the Countess.

In the letter, which Lady Nithsdale read again and again with varying emotions of hope and fear, the Duchess said,—

"At my earnest request my Lord Duke has been constant in his inquiries concerning the prisoners in the Tower, and your good lord arrived there in health and safety on the 10th of December.

"I understand, dearest coz, that he is not inconveniently lodged, and is not in want of any necessary comfort.

"Many of your party, we hear, who have been slack in openly joining the rebellion (pardon the word, dear Winifrede) have made peace with their consciences by supplying the Jacobite prisoners with money and luxuries.

"It is said that amongst the more thoughtless of the prisoners (of which, needless to say, your good lord and my good cousin is not one) much mirth and revelry prevail. They are buoyed up with the hope that their surrender at Preston will stand them in good stead, and they seem to concern themselves but little about their trial.

"The Earl of Derwentwater has said that many of his followers are more fit inhabitants for Bridewell than a state prison.

"Now, I must proceed to tell my sweet cousin that the Lords will be impeached for high treason on the tenth day of January, and I am informed that one of these Lords earnestly desires the presence of his wife.

"Let her come with all speed, privately, and be sure to show no sign of her high rank, for those in

power watch jealously the manner of riotous living and luxury, in which some of the prisoners indulge.

"I would repair myself to the Tower to visit my good cousin, the Earl, and to report to you how he fares by personal observation, but my Lord Duke, who is ever wise and prudent (and well it is for me that he is so), forbids me to go publicly to the Tower, and to go privately might have caused suspicion.

"For 'stone walls do not a prison make,' and your mad-cap cousin, as you called me once, had no mind to be thought, by want of discretion, a 'divine Althea' whispering at the grates! Ah, sweet cousin, I am sobered since those merry days when my Lord Duke brought me first to Terreagles. These are times when the most unthinking must needs reflect, and the most light-hearted be saddened by what goes on in this poor country. And now, sad or merry, thoughtful or giddy, my heart is still with my dear Winifrede, and she may count on my willing service when I may, perchance, be useful. She will not fail to inform me when she reaches London, and till then, and ever after, she will believe that I am her faithful friend and cousin,*

"CHRISTIAN MONTROSE."

* This letter is based on one published in Lady Dacre's account of the Countess of Nithsdale.

“Quick, Amy, quick; there is not a minute to be lost. I will start without an hour’s delay. Call Walter Elliot hither. Did I not tell you that voice in my dream meant that I must stay no longer here. And now comes this letter, by which I learn that my lord desires me to come, and I will depart with all speed.”

From this moment Lady Nithsdale seemed to be inspired with wonderful courage.

What would have seemed insurmountable barriers to others were nothing in her eyes, so determined was she to effect her purpose.

Walter Elliot, when summoned to his lady’s presence, found her standing before a large box, which had been secured in the adjoining room, which was used by the Earl for the despatch of business.

“See, good Walter, in this iron box are precious documents that may fall into the hands of the Government emissaries if they search the castle when it is found out I have left it. I want to bury them in the ground, in an unfrequented spot, before I start.”

“But the snow is deep,” Walter urged.

“Are there no stout arms to clear it away, I pray? Give orders at once, and I will myself see the burial safely done.”

There seemed no possibility now of refusing any request Lady Nithsdale might make.

It was done as she desired, under the spreading branches of a solitary fir tree, which stood, the last survivor of a wood, in a remote part of the grounds of Terreagles Castle. The deep pit was dug, and, following Walter Elliot, who bore the precious chest in his arms, Lady Nithsdale, wrapped in furs and her head protected by a warm hood, saw it let down into its grave, and watching the earth filling over it, turned away, saying, in a low and mournful voice,—

“Till better days dawn, and my lord returns to his own again.”

Then to the men who had done as she had ordered, she said,—

“I shall know the spot, when the time arrives, to unearth the treasure, and till then those who are left of you in this desolate place will guard it, if any search should be made.”

“We will guard it, and aught beside that you entrust to us, my lady, and die sooner than harm should come to it.”

“I thank you, my good, kind people. May God bless you, and I ask you to pray for your noble master, who is a prisoner in the Tower.”

“We will, we do,” came in one voice from the

men, as, accompanied by Walter Elliot and Amy Evans, Lady Nithsdale returned to the castle.

It is very hard, we may almost say impossible, for us, in these days of swift locomotion, to realise what a journey from Dumfries to London implied in the early part of the eighteenth century.

In fair weather in the height of summer, when daylight scarcely fades in the west, in those northern regions, before dawn breaks in the east, such a journey as Lady Nithsdale undertook would still have been long and tedious and beset with difficulties.

What then must it have been in the depth of winter, with the snow on the ground, and a hard frost making the roads slippery in places where the sun had melted the snow in the daytime, to be frozen over again at night with a thicker covering of ice?

There is nothing like the constraining power of love, and this made the tenderly-nurtured and dearly-loved wife of the Earl of Nithsdale full of courage and hope that she was on the way to see her husband and comfort him by her cheering words.

No thought of risk to her own health by exposure and fatigue ever entered her head. Her sweet face shone with the light of hope, for every toilsome mile

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on that weary journey brought her nearer to him, for whom no sacrifice she could make was too much. Amidst other dangers she had to encounter was the danger of being recognised, and it was not till she was far over the border on her way to Newcastle that she breathed freely.

At Newcastle, after a consultation with Walter Elliot, it was decided that the travellers should take the stage-coach and leave the horses there with one of the serving-men, to return at leisure to Dumfries.

Lady Nithsdale drew her hood over her face, and wrapped in the folds of her long cloak, she leaned back in a corner of the big, cumbrous vehicle, with Amy next her, and Walter Elliot on guard outside.

There were several other passengers, and the conversation turned upon the state of the country and the ruin of the sheep trade which the late unsettled condition had caused.

One Scotch farmer was loud in his denunciation of the rebel Lords, and their folly in proclaiming a mock King.

"However," he continued, "the King will have their heads off before another month is over. The whole lot of 'em—Derwentwater, Nithsdale, and the rest. They'll get their deserts, every one of them.

I'd like to see the show. I'd cheer the headsman till I was hoarse."

"I pray you, sir," Lady Nithsdale said, "what is your authority for saying this—saying that the King will be so merciless?"

"I don't choose to give my authority to a bit of a lass like you, and it strikes me you'd be best in your own house, if you've got one, than out in weather like this, creeping and crawling as we are through the snow. Maybe you are going to meet a sweetheart?"

Amy, now afraid that her mistress's voice and dignified way of speaking might betray her, exclaimed,—

"And what if we are? it's no concern of yours."

"Come, now, don't be affronted; you are a pair of pretty creatures for all you keep your hoods so close. I can swear to that. Are ye for London?"

"Yes, sir," Amy replied; "our friends live in London."

"Well, if the snow goes on falling like this we shall never get to York, much less to London. There, I thought so; we are stuck in a drift."

With much working and hauling, and struggling of the poor horses, the coach righted itself, and the ungainly vehicle lumbered on its way again.

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But on reaching York the snow was so deep that it was difficult for the horses to pull through the streets, which were blocked so as to be almost impassable.

A miserable night was passed in a dismal room in an inn at York, and in the morning Walter Elliot brought the news that all traffic of wheels was stopped, and it was impossible to proceed on the journey.

"But I *must* proceed, good Walter. Already there has been too much delay. Hire some saddle horses, for I must and will start on my journey."

"Dear lady," Walter Elliot replied. "I must do your bidding, but it is with a heavy heart. It may not hurt Amy here, who was accustomed in her youth to the wild passes of the Welsh mountains; but for you—"

"It will be far better than enduring the misery of suspense. Nay, Walter, my mind is made up, and I bid you to hire such horses as you can, and we must start at once."

Thus in an hour's time the journey was resumed.

The sun shone brightly in a clear sky, and the stately towers of York Minster were traced out in purest silver as they caught the rays of the sun. Every roof was clothed with a thick covering of

spotless white, and as the town was left behind, the country lay stretched out in all the beauty of a fine winter's morning. The horses were often up to their haunches in snow, and the progress was almost as slow as it was on the previous day.

As they approached one village, the gaily-painted sign, with the letters in gold, of "King George's Head," made Amy say,—

"Shall we not tarry here, my dear lady, and get a little warmth?" and Amy shuddered.

"Are you so cold, my poor girl? I feel no cold. I think only of the way, the long, long way, and that he, my dear lord, is waiting for me—perhaps thinking that I am not coming to him, perhaps looking for me, and listening in vain for my footsteps. Nay, I cannot stop at this hostel, but we will find another, humbler, maybe, which will serve our purpose. Then press on, it is the delay, not the cold, that is painful. Cold and heat are alike to me till I reach London."

The longest journey must end at last, and on the evening of the twenty-third of January, the gleaming lights of London were like stars of hope to the tired travellers.

"We are drawing near the city, now, madam. In which direction shall we seek for lodging to-night?"

"To the Tower, where my lord is a prisoner. How can you ask the question?"

"My dear lady," Walter Elliot said, "I fear me you will gain no entrance there this evening, and that on the morrow an order will be necessary."

"Let us put up the horses at the first inn," Lady Nithsdale said, "for the night, and I will proceed to the house of my cousin, the Duchess of Montrose; but send one of the men forward to announce my approach."

"And meanwhile, madam," Amy said, "I will seek the house of Mrs. Morgan, whom I knew when she was Mistress Millicent Hilton, and I was living in Wales with my mother, under the roof of the Duchess of Powis. I believe I can find her, and while you go to the Duchess I will wait on her. I know that Mr. Morgan is in favour at the new Court, and he may have the will to serve you."

"But, Amy, if in favour at the Court, is it safe to let this gentleman know I am here, the wife of one they call a rebel lord?"

"Mistress Morgan is the same as in days past, when she was Mistress Hilton, I am not afraid. She will be kind and helpful. I know her house, as it is not long ago since I heard of her through her waiting-woman, and I will speedily return to you, my

lady, when I have sought her counsel as to where we should lodge."

"Under vows of secrecy, Amy; I pray you be cautious."

"Your ladyship may trust me; and now, farewell!"

Thus accompanied by one of the men-servants, while the other was despatched to the Duchess of Montrose, Amy, full of hope that she should find a friend in need, departed. After a short rest, Lady Nithsdale bid Walter Elliot hire a coach at the inn where they had stopped, and, mounting the box, go with her to the Duke's house, where the messenger, announcing her coming, had preceded her.

As they passed slowly through the streets, which were blocked with snow, Lady Nithsdale was struck with the silence which reigned.

Presently, as they neared the river, a ruddy glow and the sound of music, and shouting of a multitude, made her look out of the window. When they came to one of the frequent stoppages, Walter Elliot dismounted from the box, and immediately sank up to his knees in snow.

"There is a wonderful sight yonder, my lady; they are roasting whole oxen on the river, which is frozen as hard as rock, so the coachman says. And

there is one of the biggest fairs ever seen in London held on it. If your ladyship looks out, you will see something of it."

"I see the light; that suffices, good Walter. I have no heart to look at aught of festivity now. Press forward."

And Lady Nithsdale sank back in the coach, and Walter, with a sigh, remounted the box.

On her arrival at the Duke's mansion, the travel-stained, weary traveller sank into a chair in the hall, where the retinue of the Duke's servants stood by, uncertain as to who this strange visitor might be, and conducted her to a small ante-room, leading from the hall, where petitioners and pensioners on the Duke's bounty were shown.

"Apprise the Duchess of my arrival," Lady Nithsdale said, in a tone which was that of command. "She expects me."

In another moment the Duchess came in, dressed for the Court, in the loveliest of brocades, her beautiful neck glittering with diamonds, while pearls were wound in the coils of her hair, surmounted by an erection of feathers and ribands.

Infinite pity filled the Duchess's heart as she clasped her poor, forlorn cousin in her arms, and felt how great was the contrast between them. And

she had such heavy tidings for her, which she scarcely knew how to tell her.

“My poor Winifrede, my sweet cousin, come with me to my own chamber, and take the rest you so greatly need.”

“Yes, I need rest; but there is no rest for me yet. Tell me of my husband.

“He is well; but, dearest cousin, try to be calm, for you have much before you.”

“I know it. I know it. Twelve weary days of travel in this weather have taken my strength away; but I am ready now to do whatever you counsel me to do. Be pitiful, dear cousin; I must see my dear lord—that is the first thing for me to do.”

“Yes, yes, on the morrow. You must be patient, and, of all things, you must not be rash.”

They were in the Duchess’s own room now, and here Lady Nithsdale took the reviving draught the Duchess gave her, and then pushing back her hair from her forehead, and unfastening the heavy, fur-lined cloak which she had worn on her long journey, she said,—

“What news is there? It is near three weeks since I had your letter. I know that on the tenth day of this month the Lords were impeached for

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high treason. Of course my noble husband pleaded guilty?"

"Yes, and so did Lord Derwentwater and Lord Kenmure. Lord Widdrington shuffled, and asked for delay."

"Ah! that would be impossible for my lord. He would die sooner than be untrue to his cause. Sure my lord's surrender at Preston will be in his favour."

The Duchess was afraid to encourage false hopes, for she knew, from what the Duke said, of all the prisoners the Earl of Nithsdale was looked upon with the greatest suspicion. He was known to be a leading member of Scotch nobility, and a staunch Catholic.

"We will hope for the best," the Duchess said, "and now let me tell you that you must, on no account, share your husband's imprisonment; that would destroy any hope we might have of moving in his favour."

"I will do as you desire; but see him—oh! I *must* see him on the morrow."

"Yes, yes, cousin." But she thought, "what a meeting it will be, for I do not believe there is any hope for poor William Maxwell's life."

"May I await my faithful Amy Evans' return?" Lady Nithsdale asked. "She is gone to seek for

humble lodgings where I shall be unknown. I know I cannot stay here. I, the wife of a rebel lord, in the house of one of the most distinguished of King George's nobles."

"It will be best; nay, it is imperative," the Duchess said, "for you to be in a place of security. That could not be here, I know. I will bid you farewell now, for, as you see, I am dressed in all this finery for the Court, and I will order my own waiting-woman, Cicely, to bring you proper refreshment. Meanwhile, take what rest you can, and let Cicely dress your disordered hair, and wash your poor, tear-stained face with rose-water."

Then, with many loving words and showers of kisses, the beautiful Duchess of Montrose went to the chair which awaited her, to be borne by four powdered footmen, and preceded by two liveried servants with lighted torches, to St. James's.

CHAPTER X.

A FAIR ON THE ICE.

ALL the noise and bustle of London seemed to be concentrated on the frozen river.

The deep snow muffled every sound in the streets, and high and low, rich and poor, gentle and simple, were disporting themselves on the ice.

Gaily-decorated booths were filled with all kinds of wares, and the owners stood by them inviting purchasers of ribands and laces and every kind of trinket.

Games were played, and men and maidens were dancing to the sound of flutes and violins, while drums beat before the shows of wonderful monstrosities—a calf with two heads, giants and dwarfs, and lambs with six legs instead of four.

The great event of roasting two oxen on the ice had attracted thousands of the poor, who, pinched with cold and unable to get warmth in their own squalid homes, rejoiced in the fitful flames of the large furnace which had been kindled, and held out

eager hands with pipkins and tin dishes for the scraps of meat which fell as the joints were divided.

Such a scene as this was likely to make a deep impression on David Llewellyn, who was thoughtful and meditative by nature, and whose mind was full of the sharp contrasts of life which a crowd like this always suggests.

The Tower, looming on the north bank of the river, and standing out dark and sombre against the bright blue sky of the brilliant winter's day, seemed to bring forcibly before him the gallant men who, within sound of all this merry-making, were awaiting the summons to die.

A bustle in the crowd, with a band of buglers and a detachment of the Guards clearing the way, announced the coming of the Prince of Wales, who was greeted with cheers as he walked warily over the slippery surface of the ice, along which sawdust and ashes had been strewed.

The sudden falls of some of the soldiers caused laughter amongst the spectators, and the Prince himself joined in the merriment. "But a sorry prince!" David thought, "and yet it is the cause, not the men, that signifies. Better, sure, the King who will uphold the Protestant succession and the liberty of the subject than one who would bring us again under

the Pope, as his father tried to effect, and encroach, little by little, on the freedom of every man in his kingdom.

Yet David turned away somewhat sadly from the gay scene, and made his way to London Bridge to inquire for the health of Michael Paston.

He found Christian in her accustomed place by her father's side. He had revived somewhat, and greeted David with a smile.

"Well, my friend, do you bring any news of finding that old document which I begged you to seek amongst the papers at your office?"

"No, sir. So far, my search is in vain. My employers announced a holiday to-day. Business is at a standstill, for all the life of the town is out yonder. You have a fine view from your windows, sir."

"Yes, the people are always ready for mad freaks, and, I confess, the noise is very disquieting. Is it not so, Christian?"

"The noise is not so great as yesterday, dear father; but as Master Llewellyn says all business is at a standstill, may I not go and relieve Barnby from his duty? No one has been in the shop to-day, and it is near two o'clock."

"Yes, yes, you are ever thoughtful for others, my

daughter. Let the shop be securely fastened, and the shutter bolts drawn."

When Christian was gone to do her father's bidding, David took a seat in the window, and watched the crowds which thronged the frozen river below.

"David Llewellyn," the old man said, "come a little nearer. I would fain speak to you now we are alone. As you see, I am failing fast; I want more help for my daughter. I propose to you to come here and take a share in my business and, when I am gone, succeed me. It is many months now since you first came hither, rescued by my daughter's hand out of the water. I have seen in you much that I admire—of steadiness of purpose, of demeanour far different from that of the foolish young sparks who annoy me by their very existence—empty-headed fools, who cry for a new king as children cry for a toy. You are of a different sort."

"Sir," David said quickly, moved by the old man's words, and feeling that the time had come when he must speak. "Sir, your kindness is very great. I have purposely abstained from coming hither too often, though my inclination was ever to turn towards the house. I love your daughter. From the first moment I saw her face, like that of an

angel, bending over me as I fought for life, I have loved her, worshipped her."

"Your hand! David Llewellyn. I am well satisfied. Does my daughter know of your love?"

"Yes, sir, yes; but hear me to the end. I must not deceive you. I am opposed heart and soul to the Jacobite cause, and I rejoice in their late defeat at Preston, though I mourn over the fate of the doomed men awaiting their death in yonder Tower."

All the latent fire in Michael Paston's nature blazed forth now, as with trembling voice and passionate gesture, he said,—

"And do you think I would let my daughter wed with a rebel, for rebels they are who have set aside their lawful King for an alien and a usurper? Begone, sir, I wish to see you no more, and I marvel at your treachery—eating my bread as you have done, philandering with my daughter, and all the time a traitor at heart."

"Hear me, sir. I have but seldom eaten of your bread. I have never disguised my real opinions from your daughter."

"And she—is *she* a traitor, then? Oh! I may say in the bitterness of my soul, *Et tu, Brute*, if she is false."

"Nay, sir, she is true as gold. She would not have you disturbed by hearing that I was an anti-Jacobite. She feared—"

"What did she fear?"

"That, in your feeble state, the knowledge of my opinions might be harmful, coupled as they are with my undying love for her. Whether wisely or not, it was your daughter's love for you, and my love for her, which kept me silent. It seemed that my presence was not unacceptable to you, and that my scanty help in the deciphering of manuscripts was valued. Sure, sir, we may yet be friends, though taking different views on public matters."

"We cannot be friends—we are foes henceforth. I will have none of you, or your pack of rebellious fools; so you know my views. Here, Christian," he said, as his daughter returned; "here, show your fine suitor the door, and let him go and lick the shoes of the new King, who can scarce speak our English tongue, and is a cantankerous fellow, who quarrels with his own son, and keeps a pair of squint-eyed mistresses before the face of his people. I denounce him, I hate him; and I pray—though I shall not live to see it—that he may be thrust off his ill-gotten throne, and sent packing to his dunderhead Germans."

“Oh, father!” Christian said, frightened by her father’s agitation. “What has brought about this burst of indignation?”

“I have been the cause,” David said. “I dare not hide the truth any longer. When your father proposed that I should come here, take up his business, and, it may be, succeed to it hereafter, was I not bound in honour to declare my sentiments?”

“Yes,” Christian said; “yes, it may be that they should have been declared sooner; but I am to blame. I—I could scarce bear to see you banished from this house—you, who have tended to my father’s happiness, and—and—to mine.”

David took Christian’s hand in his and kissed it reverently.

“You have ever been as a saint in heaven to me, and I shall love you, and you alone, till death.”

“Oh, father!” Christian said, kneeling at the old man’s side, “why should differences like these sever true friends? What is it to us that the people of England are content to swear allegiance to King George? Let us have peace and love one with another.”

“Do you tell me you love this man, Christian?”

Christian bowed her head upon the withered hand she held, and said in clear, low tones,—

“Yes, father, I do.”

“Then take him; but leave me, leave me to die alone—alone.”

“Ah, you know it is cruel to speak thus. I will never leave you, father!”

“Well, well, I am nigh dying of exhaustion now. Send that man away, and let me see his face no more.”

David waited one moment, and laying his hand on Christian’s bowed head, he said,—

“I go, sir, at your bidding; but I go with my love to your daughter unchanged, and,” he added, “as God knows, unchangeable. If ever a softer mood towards me should come, and you see fit to recall me, I will obey your summons. And now, my only beloved one, farewell.”

There was the sound as of a man’s dry sob hardly suppressed, and the next moment the father and daughter were alone.

Awdry Chenery was the gayest of the gay on the ice. Her old lover, Harry Mills, had come home again, and finding her still free, he declared his in-

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tention of marrying her before he started on another voyage.

But there were two to be consulted in this matter, and Awdry found her freedom so pleasant, that she hesitated about pledging herself to Harry for life.

"Come home to my mother, Awdry," he was saying, "and hear what she has to say. I am a steady fellow now, and I have saved some money. And, when I've been two or three more voyages, I'll settle down at the wharves, and we'll have a pretty little house, full of the pretty things you favour."

"I'll not promise—not to-day, at any rate; but I don't mind if I come along with you, only don't let your mother scold me for wearing finery, and all that stuff and nonsense."

Harry Mills was so intent on elbowing his way through the crowd that he did not notice he was getting near the spot where the Prince of Wales and his gentlemen were standing watching some morris dancers, for whose performance a space had been cleared, surrounded by the Prince's bodyguard.

"Back, back, you villain," a man called out, and Harry Mills received a thrust with the butt-end of a musket.

"Confound you! let me pass," he said; "prince or no prince."

"Seize him; he is a Jacobite, I'll swear!" said another voice.

Harry Mills furious at being hustled, and afraid lest Awdry, who was clinging, terrified, to his arm should be hurt, gave the soldier a blow which sent him reeling back on the crowd, and caused great confusion.

Presently Harry was seized, and would have been taken off to Newgate, had not the Prince sent to inquire who was blocking the progress of yonder fair maiden.

For Awdry's beauty, heightened by her distress, was just of the type to attract the attention of a man like the Prince.

"By God!" he exclaimed in his broken, guttural English, "you are a pretty mistress for any man," as Awdry was brought to him.

"Oh, sir!" Awdry said, "let us pass, I pray you. I am on my way to Mistress Mills's house in Tower Place. I am frightened to death. And where is Harry?"

Before anyone could answer the question, Harry Mills and one of the men who obstructed his pro-

gress were seen in a close struggle, of which Harry was getting the mastery.

"Let me pass," he shouted, as he held his enemy by the throat. "Let me pass, or I'll throttle you so as you'll never squeak again!"

Then there was another violent conflict, and finally Harry was tripped up and thrown on the ice, with the blood streaming from his forehead.

Poor little Awdry, woman-like, now that her lower was in trouble, felt all her love awakened for him.

She rushed to the place, and kneeling down by Harry, she tried to staunch the blood with her kerchief, crying over him, and begging the by-standers to help her.

Harry was stunned by the shock of the fall, but presently regained his feet, and was about to resume the fight with his antagonist, when the Prince himself stepped up.

"Forbear!" he cried, "I command you. Be off peaceably, or I will order you to prison."

"Yes, Harry, dear Harry," Awdry cried; "come away, come away."

"He is some rascal of a Jacobite," one of the bystanders said. "Off with him to a prison cell."

Harry turned fiercely on the speaker.

"Ay, for once you are telling no lie. I am the loyal subject of King James the Third."

And then, hitting the man a blow on the chest, there would have been another fight, had not two of the guards seized Harry, and amidst much hubbub and hisses and huzzas from the crowd, he was marched off to prison.

Poor, foolish little Awdry, with tears streaming down her face, made an effort to follow him, but was pressed back by the throng, and found herself near the Prince's side again.

She knelt before him with clasped hands.

"Ah, sir," she said, "do pardon him! he is hot-headed and passionate, but he means no harm; and I and my mother are true subjects of King George."

"Remove the forward wench," one of the gentlemen standing near said. "Go about your business," he said; "you are obstructing the Prince's view of the dancers."

But the Prince turned angrily on the man, who was attempting rather roughly to raise Awdry from her position. He burst forth in German, with now and again a few words of English, and giving his hand to Awdry, he said,—

"You be happy. I will see yonder fellow is set free. Ill words hurt no one. A night in a cell will

cool his blood, and you shall have him safe and sound on the morrow."

Poor Awdry took the clumsy hand of the Prince between both of hers, and kissed it again and again.

"There, there. Take her home." And then, in an undertone, he said with a bitter laugh, "His Majesty has one fair subject, forsooth. I hope when my turn comes I may have one like her. Why did you not take her name, you fools?" he added, as Awdry's little figure disappeared in the crowd, one of the soldiers clearing the way for her escape. "I would fain see her again. She is worth a score of the be-wigged and be-painted graces that swarm at Whitehall. Now, I have seen enough of this. Scatter some silver pieces amongst the crowd, and let us march off. The air is colder than ever I felt it in Hanover."

Amy Evans had been very successful in her visit to Mrs. Morgan. Far from ignoring their former acquaintance, she had promised to do all she could for her mistress, who had come to London under such sad circumstances.

Mrs. Morgan's husband had a place about the Court, and his wife was therefore well informed of

the feeling there as to the probable fate of the rebel Lords now in the Tower.

The Earl of Nithsdale's doom was, Mrs. Morgan heard, sealed. A staunch Catholic and a man of great influence on the border, coming of a family who had ever been fervent supporters of the house of Stuart, he was especially marked out as an enemy of King George, who ought to be got out of the way, and all fear of his influence ended.

"For him and Lord Derwentwater there is but scant hope," Mrs. Morgan said. "At the same time, dear Amy Evans, I will do my best to get my husband to bring interest to bear in high quarters. Yet I advise you not to suffer your mistress to be buoyed up with false hopes. As to a lodging, where you will be safe from curious eyes, I think I can find the very place for your lady near the Tower. My good friend Mrs. Mills is glad to let some of her rooms. I will inquire of her at once, and communicate with the Countess at the Duchess of Montrose's. I marvel a little that the Countess has repaired to her mansion; she and the Duke are sworn subjects of King George."

"The Duchess is of kin to my dear lady, madam, and wrote her the letter which brought us to London."

"Is that so? Well, I hope such bravery as the Countess has shown will be rewarded."

"Ah! madam, you may well speak of my lady's bravery; surely there never was one to compare with her. Such a journey as we have had through snow-drifts and along roads where we could scarce see the track. Two of our serving-men riding before us and trying to show the way. Often the bitter cold made me complain—more shame to me—but my lady did not seem to feel it, or, if she felt it, and the fatigue of sitting on horseback day after day, she never murmured. It was the love at her heart which urged her on and made her think nought of all difficulties for the sake of accomplishing her purpose. Yet so tenderly has my lady been nurtured, that I fear for her. Oh! I fear for her life, if her great exertions for my lord should fail. Worn out in body, if this grief comes on her, I believe her heart will break and she will die."

But Amy did not long give way to these misgivings, and was soon herself again, cheering and encouraging her mistress to hope for the best.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RAINBOW OF HOPE.

MRS. MILLS met David Llewellyn on his return from London Bridge, with a disturbed face, and a manner very different from her usually quiet and gentle demeanour.

"I don't know what you will say to me, she said, as she took him into the parlour, "but I've turned you out of your chamber, and must ask you to lodge in one of the garrets for a time."

"Indeed," David said, "as I am beholden to you for my lodging for all these months, it would be sorry ingratitude if I complained at having my quarters shifted."

"I am afraid to speak above a breath, and my husband is against what I have done; but Mrs. Morgan was so urgent, and I have done it, and must abide by it."

"Done what?" David asked.

"Taken into my house the Countess of Nithsdale and her waiting-woman. She is come all the long

journey from Scotland on horseback, to try and move the King to pardon the Earl. She is in your room now, waiting for her turn to come to see the prisoner in the Tower. It would melt a heart of stone to look at her. She is the beautifullest woman and the saddest I ever saw. You don't feel aggrieved at what I've done, David?"

"Not I," David said—"on my own account; but I have my fears for you. It might go hard with you if it were known that you are harbouring this poor lady."

"Ah! that's what my husband says; but unless Harry blabs—and he has a rash tongue—no one need know, and I may trust you, David Llewellyn."

"Yes; you know me well enough for that; but," he added with a sigh, "I am paying dear, like many another, for holding to what I believe is the cause of liberty. If I chose to turn like the vane on a steeple, I might get my heart's desire and have Christian Paston for my wife. As it is, her father has cursed me, and bid me begone from his house for ever."

"Poor old Michael! he was ever relentless in his hatred to the Germans, but what now?" Mrs. Mills said, as Awdry Chenery, with dishevelled locks and her hood all awry, came rushing into the room, and threw herself on Mrs. Mills's neck.

"Harry! Harry!" she cried, "he is taken to prison. He will be hung; he will die."

"What do you mean, child?" Mrs. Mills said. "Are you crazy, dear heart? There seems no end to my trouble," and Mrs. Mills sank down on a chair, Awdry still clinging to her and sobbing out that "Harry was in prison. Would no one go to rescue him?"

David Llewellyn now spoke, and his firm, decided voice seemed to have an effect on Awdry.

"How can anyone help you, Mistress Awdry, if you will not tell us what has happened? Now, stop these sobs and cries, and say, if Harry is in prison, what has he done."

"Nothing, nothing! He had a scuffle with a rude soldier, and he shouted when he was angry, 'Long live King James!'"

"Oh! my poor, foolish boy," his mother exclaimed. "I thought as much; he never can keep his tongue quiet."

"The Prince," Awdry said, "was watching the show of morris dancers and jugglers on the ice, and—and he called me to him, and I think he will pardon poor Harry—only we cannot get to him. If I could get to him, I know he would pardon Harry!"

"I will see what can be done," David said, "but do not take on like this. See how ill you have made Mrs. Mills; and what will become of your mother? She will be beside herself with fear that something has befallen you."

"And she will be so angry," Awdry said, wringing her hands. "She bid me not go with Harry to the ice, but with that dunderhead Master Phillips, who lives at the sign of the 'Three Bibles'. I can't abide him, and I stole off with Harry."

"And are well punished for your disobedience," David said.

"Don't lecture and rate me, Master Llewellyn, you talk like an old man, forsooth. They say you've got an old head on young shoulders," and Awdry pouted and shrugged her shoulders, and forgetting her grief for Harry Mills, cast angry glances from her tearful eyes upon David Llewellyn. "Prythee, dear Mrs. Mills, let me stay here, till we hear what has befallen Harry."

"You had best let me take you home to your mother," David said.

"No, I won't go; I'll stay here. May I not stay, Mrs. Mills?"

She had her own way as usual, and David, after doing his utmost to allay Mrs. Mills's fears, went to

the kitchen to consult Master Mills as to what steps it was best to take.

Lady Nithsdale, worn out and exhausted slept heavily all that night in the safe retreat where, by Mrs. Morgan's kindness, she found herself with her faithful Amy Evans. In the grey dawn of the winter morning, she woke to fully realise her position.

"This day I shall see my lord, Amy; hasten to make me look as well as you can. At least comb and brush my hair, and let two or three curls loose from the snood. My lord always likes to see them, and calls them my love locks.

"Ah! how can I talk thus, as if we were to meet in the ante-chamber at Terreagles, the children springing in with their cheeks like roses, and their 'Good day, dear father and mother.' Alas! alas! that I should now go to see my dearest heart in the Tower."

But the meeting was yet delayed, and much had to be gone through first.

With Walter Elliot, who arrived early from the hostel where the men-servants and horses were put up, Lady Nithsdale, closely wrapped in her long cloak, left Mrs. Mills's house, on her way to the Tower, Amy following.

After a weary time of waiting, Lady Nithsdale

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obtained an interview with the lieutenant of the Tower.

He was suave and courteous, but informed her that his orders were strict, that no one was to be admitted to visit the prisoners till the day approached for pronouncing sentence upon them.

"There is only one alternative, madam; you will be allowed to take up your abode with the Earl in his prison, but not to leave it again on any consideration whatever."

The Duchess of Montrose had warned Lady Nithsdale that if any efforts were to be successful for the Earl, she must not be out of reach in the Tower, and that she must be content to be allowed to visit her husband at intervals.

So, sick at heart, she turned away, and almost in despair; her legs seemed to give way under her, and she was glad to accept the offer of a seat in the guard-room, where a kind soldier brought her a cup of water, and accompanying her to the outer gate, he promised to exert himself for her, and if he was on guard in the evening, and she made another attempt to enter, he would appear not to see her pass.

A piece of gold pressed into his hand secured him for a friend, and when at dusk Lady Nithsdale

returned to try her fortune once more, he was as good as his word, and, telling her to follow, led the way.

Silently this brave woman crossed the bridge over the moat, her heart beating tumultuously for fear she should be stopped and turned back.

A figure muffled in a cloak passed her at the second archway; it was the young wife of Lord Derwentwater, who had been on a like errand.

The kindly warder went with Lady Nithsdale as far as the gateway leading through what was well named the Bloody Tower. Here a young girl, the warder's daughter, met her, and holding up her hand, bid her wait till she gave the signal.

What moments of suspense followed as the loving and devoted wife waited till the moment came when she might see her husband.

Sounds of mirth from one of the rooms in the Tower jarred on her ear.

"How can anyone find the heart to laugh and be jovial here, when it chills me like the valley of the shadow of death?"

The minutes passed in agonising fear lest after all she should be disappointed—perhaps discovered and taken before the Governor of the Tower.

At last relief came; the girl returned, saying,—

"Now, madam, the guards are all engaged conducting the prisoners back to their separate rooms. It was they who were singing so lustily five minutes ago, and, as my father says, making merry with the axe hanging over their heads."

Very different was the mood in which Lady Nithsdale found the Earl.

He was reading by a single candle, its light illuminating his stately figure in the surrounding gloom.

As he heard the sound of footsteps he raised his head, and in another moment Lady Nithsdale was clasped in his arms.

"Winifrede, my gentle Winifrede, what joy is this? God be thanked that I have you once more. Five months have passed since I left you."

"They seem like five years, my dearest heart, but the worst is over now. I bring you good news of our children. They are well and happy, my sister tells me, and good and tractable also."

Then the Earl asked questions as to his wife's journey—how she had borne it, and whether she had suffered from the severity of the frost.

All these questions she answered cheerfully, and told the Earl of her visit to Scone; of her disappointment in the King.

"Sick in body and mind, and in that desolate palace with but a handful of followers—oh! I fear me it is a lost cause."

"My sweetheart, your fears are mine, and we are to die for it."

The word brought back the real position in which the Earl stood.

"Die! Never—I will not believe it—it cannot be. King George will not be so cruel. He will not stain the first years of his reign by acting the part of a bloodthirsty tyrant. Now, I must tell you, my dear lord, I have a faithful friend in the Duchess of Montrose—she will aid me to the best of her power. She bids me apply to Lord Danby and Lord Nottingham; and the Duke of Richmond, related as he is to Lord Derwentwater, will urge the King to be merciful. I desired above all things to take up my abode with you in these gloomy rooms; but the Duchess told me, if I once obtained permission to do so, I should not be allowed to leave you again. Thus I should be prevented from using every effort for your deliverance; in which I mean to be successful. Take heart, dearest love; I shall soon bring you good news."

He could scarcely bear to crush her hopes; and yet he was himself more and more convinced as time

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went on that none of the nobles who had been concerned in the rising in Scotland would be spared.

Lord Nithsdale was not without the consolations of religion. He was a devout member of the Roman Catholic Church; not as so many were—mere adherents to its forms and ceremonies and, as had been proved, quite ready to change their religion to win favour at Court.

Lord Nithsdale and his wife were both steadfast in what they had been brought up to believe was the true faith, and neither of them would have attempted to deny it, to gain worldly advantages or even life itself.

But when his wife had left him with smiles of hope shining like a rainbow through her tears, her kisses yet warm upon his cheek, the brave man's courage almost failed him.

It was for her and for his children that his heart ached.

He had deliberately taken up, from a sense of right, the cause of James the Third. He had counted the cost, and had realised that he might die a soldier's death in battle. But death on the scaffold as a traitor—his children's inheritance forfeited to the Crown, his wife a widow—now that he had seen her and felt the sweetness of her undying love,

became a more painful reality than he had felt them to be in the lonely hours of his imprisonment.

“My poor Winifrede, so full of hope. ‘The worst is over,’ she said. Ah, the worst is yet to come for her; I feel no mercy will be shown to me, nor to Derwentwater. We are doomed men.”

BOOK III.

We are not the first
Who, with best meaning, have incurred the worst.

SHAKESPEARE.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SENTENCE.

WHEN Lady Nithsdale returned to Mrs. Mills, under Walter Elliot's care, who had waited for her outside the Tower, she heard the sound of crying and lamenting in the parlour. It was Awdry, who, seated on a stool at Mrs. Mills's feet, Mr. Mills standing by, was bemoaning herself, and refusing to be comforted.

Lady Nithsdale, although full of her own anxieties and alternate hopes and fears, went quietly into the room and said in her sweet voice,—

“My poor child, what ails you? It seems there is no lack of sad hearts wherever we turn?”

“Oh, my dear lady,” Mrs. Mills said, “my son Harry, our only son, has been seized and taken to prison for shouting ‘Long live King James!’”

"Nay, nay, wife," Mr. Mills said; "there was a brawl in which Harry used his strong arm to such purpose that he felled one of the Prince's guards to the ground, or rather to the ice, and a great confusion and hubbub ensued. Such is David Llewellyn's account of the matter. He has been to the prison and found out what the charge is against our poor boy, but there is every reason to believe he will be set free, or have a light sentence. A week on bread and water in a cell will not hurt him."

"Oh," Awdry wailed; "you cruel, cruel father, how can you speak thus? And he had a cut on his head, and blood flowed. You cruel man!"

"Tut, tut, girl! no more of this. Harry would have done better to have chosen a steady wench for a wife, other than a little flighty thing like you."

Lady Nithsdale was full of compassion for the weeping girl, and gently saying,—

"This is not the time to reproach her, now her heart is sad," she took her hand and said,—"Come with me to my room and let us pray together that God will have pity on all prisoners."

This ready sympathy, when her own heart was full of sorrow, was a part of her unselfish nature, and by her kindness poor little Awdry's heart was touched,

and she became Lady Nithsdale's most fervent admirer, who was ready to do anything she could to serve her.

The days passed on leaden wings, and hoping against hope, Lady Nithsdale did her best to keep up her courage when with the Earl.

She was admitted constantly to the Tower, and every day went with fresh hopes, and every day her heart told her they grew fainter and fainter.

Then came news of James's ignominious departure from Scotland, and that the brave efforts which his adherents had made in his cause were finally defeated.

James, accompanied by the Earl of Mar, reached the seaport town of Montrose, and made his escape in a small vessel which had been secretly chartered for their use, and sailed away to France.

Safe himself, did he give no regretful thoughts to those noble prisoners who were awaiting their doom in the Tower, with many others who were confined in Newgate and Clerkenwell?

The hasty flight, recalling that of his father when he was a baby in his mother's arms, gave the final blow to the loyalty of his people, and, dispirited and depressed, the remnant of the Scotch army was dispersed and the Jacobite rising of 1715 was at an

end. On the 9th of February the Lords Nithsdale, Derwentwater, Widdrington, Nairne, and Kenmure had formal notice that they were to appear at the Bar of the House of Lords to receive sentence.

Lady Nithsdale was with her husband when the Commissioners served him with the summons, and declared her intention of being present when the sentence was pronounced.

In vain the Earl begged her to consider well before she placed herself in such a painful position, and said he feared she would find the strain on her courage too much, and, if so, add to his distress.

"No," she replied; "you need not be afraid. Oh, dearest heart, if Rachel, Lady Russell, could be with her husband throughout his trial, take notes for him, and support him by her presence, surely I may do the same. I shall be there, and you will know that I am near you, and that my heart is beating with the love that is undying."

The Earl found it hopeless to alter her resolution, and could only pray for her and for himself, that courage and calmness might be given them.

Mrs. Morgan, ever ready to do her utmost for Lady Nithsdale, procured her, through the intervention of the Earl of Dorset, a seat in Westminster Hall with Amy Evans.

"I hope I shall be in a retired corner," Lady Nithsdale said. "I might—yes, I might give way; and if I do I would fain be unseen by my lord."

"This has been arranged," Mrs. Morgan said. "Your seats are near the door, and you can easily retire if needful."

"It shall not be needful," Lady Nithsdale said. "If Lady Russell could endure a like scene, I can endure also."

And the next day, when Mrs. Morgan saw Lady Nithsdale, her fears that her courage would fail were set at rest.

She wore a long, black silk mantle, with the hood drawn over her face, and with quiet dignity took the place assigned her, with Amy Evans by her side.

The February sunshine streamed through the windows of the hall, and showed the vast concourse assembled on the floor, packed so close that it was impossible to get another inch of standing room.

The time seemed interminable to those who were waiting for the entrance of the Lords.

At last, as the clock boomed one, in loud, sonorous tones, the gates at the end of the vast hall were thrown open, and the Lords entered, followed by Garter-King-at-Arms, and the law officers of the Crown in their robes of state.

Lord Chancellor Cowper took his seat on the Woolsack, and then all heads were uncovered as the commission was read, and the Sergeant-at-Arms cried in a loud voice—"God save the King."

Then, under pain of imprisonment, silence was ordered, and the Lieutenant of the Tower was commanded to bring up his prisoners for sentence.

They came, these brave men, guarded by a jailer, and the axe borne before them.

They walked up the hall with stately dignity, bowed to the Chancellor and to the assembled peers, and then stood without any sign of emotion as the article of impeachment was read.

The usual question was put to each prisoner separately, as to whether he had anything to say why judgment should not be passed on him.

Lord Derwentwater spoke at some length, and in a clear, resonant voice. Then the Earl of Nithsdale, Lord Kenmure and the others followed.

All pleaded guilty to the charge, but expressed a hope that the King would show mercy—the highest attribute of sovereigns—of which after the battle of Preston they had received assurance.

Lord Nithsdale added on his own account that he should henceforth pay duty and gratitude to the King if he spared his life.

The Lord High Steward, who was rather deaf, asked whether the Earl of Nithsdale had pleaded anything in arrest of judgment, to which the Earl replied, in a clear voice, which was heard distinctly throughout the hall,—

“No, my Lord, I have not.”

Then there was a breathless silence as the Lord High Steward stood up and pronounced the sentence of death on James, Earl of Derwentwater, William, Lord Widdrington, William, Viscount Kenmure, William, Lord Nairne; and, after a somewhat lengthened pause, William Maxwell, Earl of Nithsdale.

During this pause, Lady Nithsdale leaned forward, and then when the name so dear to her was pronounced, she covered her face with her hands.

With a stern adherence to the letter of the law the dreadful and ignominious details of the sentence were not spared, though with a refinement of cruelty Lord Cowper prefaced them by saying that it was usual to omit them, by the grace of the Crown, when persons of the quality of the prisoners were sentenced to death, but in their case that grace could not be extended.

It is almost incredible to us who live in times not so far removed from the beginning of the eighteenth century that such a sentence, with all its

loathsome particulars, should be pronounced upon men whose only crime had been a mistaken zeal in a lost cause, and a defence of one who, in their eyes and in the eyes of many, was the rightful king.

Mercifully for her, Lady Nithsdale had fainted, and lay unconscious in Amy Evans's arms.

The Sergeant-at-Arms in his brazen voice needed not to have commanded all persons to keep silence while the procession left the hall; it was profound and unbroken. The prisoners, the peers and all the Court returned in the order they had come, and, till the procession had passed out, not a sound was heard. Then sobs of repressed feeling burst forth, and many of the spectators left the hall in tears.

They carried Lady Nithsdale into the open air, and she revived.

"Oh, my dear lady," Mrs. Morgan said, "I ought never to have allowed you to come hither; it was too dreadful, too awful."

"Hush!" the poor, stricken woman said, hush! you need not tell me. I know all. I knew it must be so. I expected it. Now, I must remember all I have to do at once."

At this moment Lord Pembroke and Lord Dorset approached, their faces showing how deeply they felt for the Earl's wife. Lady Nithsdale was, as we

know, a Herbert, and thus Lord Pembroke had a double sympathy with her as his kinswoman. He pressed her hand, but his emotion was so great he could not speak. As he handed her to the coach, she turned and said to both him and Lord Dorset,—

“You promised your good offices in case of need. You will not, my lords, forget your promise.”

They bowed assent, and having placed her safely in the carriage, turned hastily away, for strong men as they were—they were broken down with sorrow for her terrible position.

CHAPTER XIII.

AWDRY'S CONFESSION.

AWDRY'S trouble about Harry Mills was soon at an end. He had one night's prison fare in a gloomy cell, and then, brought before a magistrate, he was reprimanded and dismissed.

Awdry had yielded to the fascination which Lady Nithsdale exercised over all who knew her, and having got over the sharp scolding which, with alternate tears and kisses, Mistress Chenery gave her on her return, she went across London Bridge to tell Christian of all that had happened, and of her interview with the Countess.

Michael Paston had recovered a little, and he had heard with bitter indignation that, notwithstanding their appeal to King George's clemency, sentence of death had been passed upon the rebel lords; so strong was the spirit which in those days seemed to change even the most humane of Jacobites into revengeful partisans, whose zeal burned more fiercely as the cause of the exiled King was pronounced, even by his warmest adherents, hopeless.

A long life like Michael Paston's bore a record of changes and chances seldom matched in the space of seventy-seven years. He could go back in thought to the martyrdom of Charles the First, which had filled him with horror when a boy, and to the desperate struggle of his son to regain his kingdom from the grasp of Cromwell. He remembered well the enthusiasm that greeted his restoration, the disappointment that deepened with each year of his ignoble and tyrannical rule, and the horrors of the so-called Popish Plot. The Duke of Monmouth's rebellion marked with blood the short reign of James the Second; then came his ignoble flight on the dark waters of the Thames; but the story that was circulated, and profoundly believed in high quarters, that the boy clasped in his mother's arms in the open boat on the December night was no son of hers, had only made the loyalty of men like Michael Paston more steadfast.

The reigns of William and Mary, and Queen Anne, had been comparatively free from tumults and seditions, but when Anne died and George the First came over from Hanover, the Jacobite cause once more revived. Had James the Third shown more determination and courage, the result of the rebellion might have been different. Anyhow, the struggle

would have been a lengthened one and more blood shed, and more noble lives sacrificed. All peaceful and law-abiding members of the great Commonwealth had reason to be thankful that the Hanoverian Prince was secure upon his throne and the country spared the miseries of a prolonged civil war—of all wars, when brother lifts his hand against brother, the most disastrous and cruel.

Awdry was bursting with her news, and when Christian reproved her for causing her mother so much anxiety by not returning sooner, she said,—

“I cannot be sorry. I have seen the loveliest lady, who was so gracious to me, and when Harry came out of prison spoke to him with such sweetness that she made him ready to cry. She bid him curb his temper and his tongue, for, says she, “he who ruleth his spirit is greater than he who takes a city.””

“What is all this chatter about?” Michael Paston asked.

“It concerns Awdry, dear father, but we will go to my own chamber that our voices may not disturb you.”

When they had reached Christian’s room overlooking the river, still frozen by the longest frost on record, Awdry began to pour out her story.

"I was in the parlour at Mrs. Mills's when the Countess returned from Westminster Hall. Mrs. Mills expected she would be only fit to be carried to her bed. Instead, she was anxious to be "up and doing," as she said. Mrs. Morgan begged her to rest, but she said,—

"Rest. There is no rest for me yet. The petition must be prepared. I must have converse with Lady Nairne and Lady Derwentwater. Fetch a chair; it will be easier journeying in a chair, the snow lies so thick."

"Then she despatched Master Elliot to the Tower to learn at what hour she could see my Lord Nithsdale; and Mrs. Evans, she said, must also go forth and make purchases.

"Not to-day, my dear lady," Mistress Evans said, and the Countess replied,—"This very hour," with such a strange look in her eyes."

"Oh! poor lady," Christian said, "there is not a chance that the Earl's life will be spared. All efforts will be in vain."

"I heard them say that so fair and lovely a lady—if she presented her petition—would win the King's favour," Awdry said.

Christian shook her head.

"I would fain hope it might be so, but I fear

me nought will move the King; folk say he is as stubborn as a mule, and that he and his son the Prince of Wales hate each other, because both will have their own way, and neither will give in."

"I saw the Prince of Wales," Awdry said, her cheeks blushing rosy red. "I saw him on the ice. He spoke to me, Christian."

"What an honour!" Christian said.

"Well," Awdry returned, a little offended, "*it was* an honour, and he paid me pretty compliments, too; and when Harry was hustled off and I cried, the Prince was sorry for me, and then—"

"David Llewellyn took you in charge, poor, little, flighty Awdry."

"How do you know?"

"Because he came here last night and I spoke to him at the door; he told me of your safety, and then went over the way to quiet Mistress Chenery's fears."

"Did he? He is a right good man. Only too grave and good for me. Are you going to marry him, Christian?"

"No; it is not likely to happen, when my father forbade him the house with a curse."

"Oh! that will be forgotten, for I know you love him, Christian,—don't you?" she said, nestling close

to Christian, and raising her face, child-like, for a kiss which Christian gave her, but instead of answering the question, she said,—

“And how is it with you, little Awdry? Are you going to marry your sailor?”

“I don't know.” Then, burying her face on Christian's shoulder, she said,—“I thought I loved him dearly when I saw the cut on his forehead and those angry men hustling him away; but now— Oh! I don't want to be married yet; and Harry says he will have us called in Saint Mary Overie next Sunday! But I told him it was no use calling if nobody came. Then there are others who think I care for them. I don't—not a snap of my finger; and mother is set on my favouring that fat old man, Mark Phillips, because he is rich—but I won't have him! Forsooth, I think I'll be like you, Christian, and have none of 'em.”

“Don't play fast and loose with heart, child, or it may end in your being left sour and bitter at forty.”

“You are not sour and bitter,” Awdry said.

“I am not quite forty,” Christian said, with a smile.

“No, I know as much. You are my dear, beautiful Christian, and I vow you are a little like the

Countess, only she looks so sad. Yes, you are like her."

"Nonsense, child; I am not a lady of quality like the Countess of Nithsdale. Oh, poor soul! how my heart aches for her."

"Come to Mrs. Mills's with me on the morrow, and get a sight of her for yourself."

"No, that would look like impudent curiosity—as if I had come to spy out her grief. If I could serve her, I would come. Now I must return to my father. I hear Nancy's slow feet coming up the stairs to summon me. I have been away from him too long;" and, not waiting for Nancy to clamber up the last flight of uneven stairs, Christian bid her turn back, for she was coming quick to her father.

CHAPTER XIV.

A RUDE REPULSE.

SEVERAL interviews which Lady Nithsdale had with her husband, after sentence of death was passed on him, were painful beyond any that had gone before, for Lord Nithsdale would not listen to any scheme for his escape from the Tower.

While filled with admiration for the wife who, at the risk, perhaps, of her own life, could determine to carry it through, he would not encourage her to undertake it. All that Lady Nithsdale could persuade her husband to consent to, was to get a petition drawn up, which she was to present in person to the King.

"But if it fails; if he is still determined to take your life, then—then you will agree to my proposal?"

But the Earl, as he listened to the details of what his wife proposed to do, vehemently refused to consent to her plan.

"It will fail," he said. "It will bring trouble on

others. It will cost, perhaps, the lives of those who are concerned in it. Life is dear to me, for your sake, sweetheart, and for my children's sake; but I cannot consent to put on woman's clothes, and so try to evade suspicion. I should not evade it. I should be captured and brought back, and then be led to the scaffold as a coward who had tried to escape death by ignoble means."

In vain Lady Nithsdale prayed and besought her husband to agree to what she had, with infinite trouble, prepared. Her self-possession forsook her. She wept and wrung her hands in despair, and the Earl, distressed beyond measure at the sight of her tears, remained firm.

Perhaps, in all the sad scenes through which Lady Nithsdale had passed during the last few months, this was the saddest. Years of mental torture seemed concentrated in that hour in the prison, from which, by her means, her husband refused to attempt an escape.

"I never asked a favour of you in vain before," she moaned. "Oh! William, my dearest lord, do not say me nay now. At least promise that, if the petition fails, if I cannot move the King to extend mercy, you will then let me carry out my plan? I have well considered it. I do not act rashly, God

knoweth. I have prayed to be guided aright—I have, I have, indeed!”

“I do not doubt you, my sweet wife; let us speak no more of this now, but think as to the drawing up of the petition. It must be carefully worded, and no offence given. I must consult with those able to advise me.”

“More able than I am?” she said sadly; “but do not delay—let it be done at once. I will see Mrs. Morgan, and the Duchess and Lady Nairne. Mrs. Morgan will get us our admission to the Palace. I feel I can do anything, everything, if you will promise to accede to my wishes as to your escape if I fail with the petition.”

There were no more tears now, no agony of despair at the Earl’s refusal to enter into her scheme for the preservation of his life by an escape from his prison.

Nothing seemed able to crush the spirit of this noble woman, and as the Earl looked at her, her face pale but her eyes full of light, and her whole bearing that of one who was to meet difficulties with a resolution to overcome them, he thought he had never seen her look so beautiful—the type of all that was fair and pure in womanhood.

During the next few days, Lady Nithsdale re-

hearsed with Amy Evans her plan for effecting the Earl's escape if the petition failed.

"We must not give way to fears and doubts; we *must* succeed."

"Alas!" her faithful servant thought, "what will become of my lady if the scheme fails? I do not believe it will be possible to carry it out, nor do I think Mrs. Mills will have the courage to go through with it, and how I dread it. God grant there may be no need for us to take the awful risk. If the King pardons the Earl, all these preparations will be in vain. Ah! *if* he pardons him—how much hangs on that little word! Yet it must be a stony heart that does not soften at the sight of my mistress—her voice and her pleading looks sure no man could resist—no, not even King George."

The petition was ready by the 12th of February, and it was arranged with Mrs. Morgan that Lady Nithsdale should present herself at St. James's with Lady Nairne, who was going on a like errand to the King on the morning of the thirteenth.

Lady Nithsdale was dressed in deep mourning, which she had ordered Amy to prepare, much against her will.

She could not help shedding a few quiet tears as she looked at her mistress, clad in the sombre black

dress, relieved only by a white veil which fell in folds on either side of her face.

“Now, do not look so sad, Amy; this is no time for tears. If these mourning clothes mean aught, they mean that I shall fail to-day. And if I do fail—well, then, I have my own plan to carry out, with your help. If you fail me, then—all hope is over.”

“Nay, madam, dearest madam, I will never fail; it is about Mrs. Mills I fear; she is a gentle, retiring woman, and would dread her husband’s displeasure.”

“She may win his praise if she saves a noble life. Away with such fears; I hear the coach arriving, and I must go. Walter Elliot must stand on the foot-board with the Countess of Nairne’s servant, and you, Amy, must await our return, and pray God to soften the King’s heart.”

Lady Nairne was calm and composed; she was a woman of few words at any time, and the drive in the coach, through the now melting snow which blocked the streets, was silent.

Mrs. Morgan followed the instructions given her by her husband, and found no difficulty in procuring admission into the ante-chamber, through which the

King was to pass from his own rooms to the drawing-room.

In the deep recess of one of the bay windows, draped with curtains which partially concealed them, the three women had to wait for the coming of the King.

"His Majesty will come through these folding-doors," Mrs. Morgan said in a low voice, and from that moment Lady Nithsdale never took her eyes from the doors, clasping in her hand the petition.

Gentlemen and lords of the bed-chamber came out at intervals; the Duke of Montrose, passing gave Lady Nithsdale a smile of greeting.

The suspense became intolerable, and even Lady Nairne, always so composed, was faint from the long strain of expectation, and her hand which held the petition trembled violently.

Lady Nithsdale did not tremble, but her eyes were riveted on the door through which the King was to come, and her beautiful face wore the look of painful suspense and yet resolution not to give way, which touched Mrs. Morgan so deeply that she could hardly restrain her tears.

"So young, so lovely," she thought, "and so full of brave resolve, she is indeed a woman to love and reverence."

At last the King came—a pale man with a tie wig, wearing a plain suit of sad-coloured cloth, with stockings to match.

The King! yes, he was indeed the King, on whom the hopes of these two wives of the rebel lords looked for mercy for them. In a moment Lady Nithsdale left the recess of the window and threw herself at the King's feet.

"I am the unhappy Countess of Nithsdale, sir. I beg, I entreat your Majesty to read this petition, and to hearken to my prayer."

Lady Nairne followed, holding up her petition with both hands. But the King only waved her off, and tried to pass on to the door at the end of the room.

"I pray you, sir, be merciful," Lady Nithsdale said, speaking in French, for she was told the King had difficulty in understanding English. "Sir, I beseech you, have pity on me, have mercy; do not take the life of one of the noblest of men."

But the King made no sign of even hearing what she said. In her despair, Lady Nithsdale grew desperate, and clung to the skirt of the King's coat.

He tried to shake her off, with an impatient threat, but she would not let him go. With but

scant courtesy or any feeling of pity for her distress, George actually went stolidly on his way, dragging the half-prostrate figure of the despairing woman after him down the long room.

When the door of the drawing-room was reached, one of the lords-in-waiting forcibly wrested the King's coat from her grasp, and another, putting his arm round her, raised her to her feet.

In an instant all her self-possession returned.

She stood erect, with flashing eyes. The daughter of the noble house of Powis—born to a name dear to the heart of every Englishman, over which the saintly George Herbert had thrown an added charm as poet and priest—could ill brook this ignominious treatment. She turned to the gentleman who had raised her, and was evidently intending to take her from the room by force if necessary.

“Leave me, sir,” she said, “nor add to the insults which the wife of the Earl of Nithsdale has had to encounter, though the meanest of the King's subjects have presented petitions and have not been spurned from his feet.

The petition which she had tried to force into the King's pocket had fallen to the ground, and one of the gentlemen brought it to her, and pitying her

distress, said that if she would write a few words in pencil to the Earl of Dorset, who, he knew, was kindly disposed towards her, he would himself see that it reached its destination. Lady Nairne had already committed her petition to the care of a friendly hand, and there was nothing left for the two stricken women but to return the way they came.

Lady Nairne was comparatively calm and composed. She had secret intelligence that her petition was likely to be successful, and that for Lord Nairne there were hopes of pardon.

But no one dare say as much about Lord Nithsdale. He was dreaded as a man of great influence, and, moreover, a staunch Roman Catholic, which told against him. When Lady Nithsdale went to the Tower to tell the Earl the result of her visit to St. James's, she softened the account of the treatment she had received as much as possible.

But it had already reached the ears of the prisoner by one of his friends who was present. The King's most unprecedented behaviour to a woman in dire distress had filled him with indignation. The Earl paced his prison room with his brows knit, his arms folded, and seemed unable to speak calmly to his wife when she came to him in

the evening of that day which had seen her humiliation at St. James's.

"Do not take it so much to heart, my dearest lord," she said, doing her best to smile and make light of what had happened. "It is over now, and I think," she added proudly and scornfully, "none who saw what happened, or who may hear of it in after times, will think that the King's conduct adds to the lustre of his crown. But now, my dear heart, I entreat your promise, that you will suffer me to carry out my scheme for your deliverance."

"It will only bring fresh humiliation," the Earl said; "new trouble, new disappointment. Your brave spirit will be crushed, and who can tell how disastrous to you, my dearest wife, may be the consequences of your attempt?"

"But I am ready to risk it, and I am confident of success. God will help me. His good angels have watched over me in the perils of my long journey hither. I have been comforted, ay, and supported by unseen ministers of grace. Do you not recall those words in which the blessed angels are spoken of as ministering spirits, and I know they have been near me."

The Earl could only fold his wife in his arms and murmur over her a thousand loving words, and

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so she left him to go on with her preparations and keep up a brave heart, full of hope that she would succeed in saving his life—and what else mattered?

“What if I have to die instead of him? Is there not One who laid down His life for us—for love’s sake?”

The next few days were full of excitement, hope and fear alternately filling the hearts of the wives of the condemned lords. The youthful Lady Derwentwater made an unsuccessful appeal to the King, though she was introduced into his presence by the Duchess of Cleveland, the Dukes of St. Albans and Richmond, and an extraordinary effort was made on her behalf.

It was all to no purpose. The King remained stolidly indifferent to the appeal, and refused to pardon those who had made so bold an attempt to unseat him from his throne, and place on it the man, who, by common consent, was called a Pretender, and set aside as such even by his sisters, Queen Mary and Queen Anne.

Then when the order in council was passed that the execution of the rebel lords should be carried out with no delay, and warrants to this effect despatched to the Governor of the Tower, and to the

Sheriffs of London and Middlesex, one last effort was made.

On the 21st of February a sad company of women, united by the bonds of a common grief, repaired to the lobby of the House of Peers, and prayed the Lords to intercede for their husbands to the King.

But their application was scarcely heeded; and another, which they made to both Houses, with passionate earnestness, met with no success.

The Earl of Pembroke, in the House of Lords, exerted himself in Lady Nithsdale's favour, and Lord Danby pleaded for Lady Nairne, and urged that the petitions of the several lords should be read.

Lord Pembroke, in an address, which was eloquent and impressive, moved that the King had power to pardon those peers who had been impeached and condemned for high treason.

This point had been raised by the Government, but in the end they were defeated, and an address agreed upon to the King, asking him to grant a reprieve to the lords now under sentence of death.

The hope thus kindled soon died away. An amendment was carried, which set forth that His Majesty was not asked to grant an indiscriminate pardon, but only to such of the prisoners as had

shown themselves worthy of such a mark of his favour.

Then Lady Nithsdale ceased to make any further effort, for she knew well enough that the petition which had been signed by some of the lords would never meet with her husband's approval. Abject submission, and retraction of principles, even in the face of death, his wife knew well he would never make.

Now, there was nothing left to her but to make immediate preparation for the escape from the Tower, which, with so much thought and prayer to One who could help and support her, she was determined to effect.

But the great difficulty that now lay in her way was to gain her husband's consent to her plan.

As soon as the appeal to the King was given up as hopeless, Lady Nithsdale summoned all her courage, and went to the Tower to lay before her husband her scheme.

Undaunted by difficulties hitherto, she yet dreaded this last which had to be overcome—the Earl's refusal to allow her to carry out her cherished plan.

It was even a greater trial than she had expected.

Lord Nithsdale held out for a long time, urging the misery which would follow if he was brought back after a futile effort to escape. Then what would happen to her if he did make good his exit from the Tower; what agony he would suffer on her account, what torture of mind, and what self-reproach for yielding to her wishes.

But at last Lady Nithsdale's distress, as she knelt at his feet and besought him not to leave her a widow; not to leave his children fatherless; not to crush her with a sorrow she felt she could not bear; saying that if he refused to agree to her plan, he would break her heart and she would die, leaving the boy and girl they loved so well orphans—all this, pleaded with tears and an agony of entreaty, prevailed at last.

The Earl gave the promise she desired, and promised also to leave himself in her hands, to do as she thought best.

"For once, dear heart," she said, smiling through her tears, "for once I command and you obey. It is the first time, and it will be the last. Do not expect me till dusk to-morrow evening, and stand ready to act as I desire. Say once again you promise," and the Earl answered solemnly,—

"My word is given. I will not draw back."

Lady Nithsdale left the Tower full of hope, and set herself, immediately on her return to her lodgings, to go over with Amy the details of her plan, but determining not to call in Mrs. Mills for consultation till the following afternoon. Mrs. Morgan must first be summoned by Walter Elliot, a coach ordered, and then—"Oh! Amy, then—*deliverance!*"

CHAPTER XV.

UN FAIT ACCOMPLI!

It was the afternoon of the twenty-third of February, when Lady Nithsdale sent Amy for Mrs. Mills, and her faithful Walter Elliot for Mrs. Morgan.

Lady Nithsdale was standing by a heap of garments of various sizes when Mrs. Mills came in.

"I want to thank you, Mrs. Mills, for all the kindness you have shown me while under your roof, and now I am about to ask you to prove still further that you are my friend. My lord, the Earl of Nithsdale, is condemned to die on the morrow. You must help me to save his life."

"Oh, madam!" Mrs. Mills exclaimed. "What can I do? I am a poor, weak woman."

"Nay, you are to be strong for my sake. Now listen! Here is a complete dress—skirt, kirtle, and long cloak and hood. They will fit you precisely. Nay, do not shrink back. See, I am going to put them on over your own gown at once. You will go with me to the Tower with Mrs. Morgan. Only one

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friend is allowed to enter my lord's room with me at a time. I will introduce Mrs. Morgan to my lord's room, and leave you in the coach, where Walter Elliot will be in waiting. I will get Mrs. Morgan to leave her own hood with me, and I will send her to hasten you to call my maid, and urging in a loud voice that you must make all speed, as I have a last petition to present to the King to-night—my last hope. Nay," she exclaimed, with her eyes shining with the foreshadowing of her coming triumph, "nay it is *not* my last hope."

Mrs. Morgan now came in answer to Walter Elliot's summons.

Lady Nithsdale kissed her affectionately.

"You dear, good soul, what would you not do for me?"

"Ah, dearest Lady Nithsdale, I would serve you, as you know; but this—this is a wild enterprise. I fear me—"

"No fears are to be spoken of. God and His angels are on my side. I shall save my husband's life. With the help of two noble women, who will win my eternal gratitude, I shall succeed. It is time to be going. Are you ready? Do you take in precisely what I propose?"

Mrs. Morgan assented.

"I think I do. But I pray God I may not break down."

"That is my dread, too," poor Mrs. Mills sighed.

"You will not break down; you will be brave." Then, turning to Mrs. Morgan, "You will well bear the weight of this hood. I am going to put it over your own redingote and hood. Help me, Amy. Ah! that is well. You look still quite charming under two hoods. Wish me God-speed, Amy. Nay, child, do not weep," for poor Amy turned away, overcome with her feelings, "but be at the bottom of the Tower stairs in an hour's time."

Who would have dreamed that this, her beautiful mistress, was setting forth on an errand of life or death—death, perhaps, for her, even if she saved her husband. With so much dignity did she bear herself, so calm and composed was her manner, that it gave her companions strength.

Mr. Mills and David Llewellyn were in the narrow passage as they passed out.

"God speed you, my lady. It is only for your sake I suffer my wife to take this risk."

"Ay," David Llewellyn said, "God keep and guard you and grant you success."

In a supreme moment like this the differences between rival interests are forgotten.

David forgot that this noble woman was going forth to save a leader of the Jacobite rebellion. He saw only in her the brave and loyal wife, who would risk her life for one she loved, and from his heart he bade her God-speed.

"You have made sure of the chamber where my lord and I are to pass the night, good Mr. Mills, for we shall not come hither, as you know; it would be a risk for your safety?"

Mr. Mills bowed.

"The chamber—a mere garret—is at your service, madam, in a retired street. I will await my lord's coming at the gate of the Tower, and conduct him thither."

"May God bless and reward you," were Lady Nithsdale's last words, as she hurried her two companions into the coach and drove away.

"I fear me," Mr. Mills said, "I shall wait in vain at the gate, or only to see my lord seized and taken back a prisoner, but I have sworn to help my lady and I will not draw back."

Lady Nithsdale talked over her plans in the coach during the drive to the Tower, and left her companions no time for reflection.

The two women, Mrs. Morgan and Mrs. Mills, were under that influence which a strong will like

Lady Nithsdale's always exercises over the weaker and less resolute nature, and they submitted to her and obeyed her instructions implicitly.

When the coach stopped at the Tower, Lady Nithsdale said,—

“I leave you here, Mrs. Mills; remember to be ready when your summons comes. You are another friend come to bid my lord adieu, and hold your handkerchief to your face, as you pass through the corridors where the guards are stationed, weeping as if in deep grief for your errand.”

“As I am, so I am, my lady,” poor Mrs. Mills said.

Then Lady Nithsdale bid Mrs. Morgan precede her from the coach, at the door of which Walter Elliot, with a heavy heart, was standing.

He had many fears that this scheme of his mistress's would fail; and if it did, what then? Death and disgrace.

Lady Nithsdale's frequent visits to the Tower had made her familiar to the guards. She never passed them without a gracious smile, a kind word and the *douceur* of a coin of the realm.

By this means she had won the favour of many of these men, who had hearts which could feel for the distress which they saw with deep pity when

wives and mothers, overcome with grief, came to bid their last farewell to a prisoner.

That Lady Nithsdale had come on this sad mission to-day none of the warders doubted, and their greeting was more than usually respectful and even sympathetic.

With swift, eager steps, Lady Nithsdale hastened to her husband's room, and threw herself into his arms.

"Oh! my sweetheart," the Earl said, "this has been a long and weary day."

"Ah!" she said, "but it ringeth for evensong now. We must act at once. See, here is my dear friend, Mrs. Morgan, my faithful and loyal friend; see what she will do for our sakes."

Mrs. Morgan now took off the dress which she had worn under her own, and the hood which had been concealed by the larger one Lady Nithsdale had provided.

"Now, my dear lord, I am not to clothe you in these garments, but in those of another friend, who will be here ere long."

The Earl shrank back.

"I cannot do it, Winifred."

But her resolution did not give way.

"You must do it, dearest, for my sake."

Mrs. Morgan could scarcely repress her tears, as she saw the noble-looking man submitting to his wife's wishes and consenting to what was so opposed to his own.

At last the time came for Mrs. Morgan to take her leave.

"Now, it is your turn; I must take you to the head of the staircase," and in the ante-room, in the hearing of the guards, she said, "Ah! lose no time in sending my maid to me, for I must needs have my hair well dressed ere I go to present the last petition to the King. Quick, I pray you, it is an urgent matter."

"Urgent, forsooth," one of the guards said in a low voice; "my lady may dress her hair as fine as may be, she won't move the King, I warrant, poor lady!"

Mrs. Mills now came up the stairs, and as if weeping, with her handkerchief over her face; then the door of the Earl's prison cell was closed, and Mrs. Mills took off her own hood and cloak, and put on those which Mrs. Morgan had left, and, in the space of a quarter of an hour, Mrs. Mills also went through the guard-room. The sentinel opened the door for her, and, by Lady Nithsdale's order, she was no longer weeping, but assumed a more cheerful

air, so that when the Earl appeared in her dress, no suspicion might be aroused.

In passing through the room again and bidding Mrs. Mills adieu, Lady Nithsdale said in a loud voice,—

“My dear Mrs. Catherine, I pray you hasten my waiting-maid. If I do not present my petition to-night it will be too late—too late.”

The guards allowed Lady Nithsdale to pass and repass with her company, feeling assured that the Earl would die on the morrow, and unwilling to make any objection to those visitors who came to bid him farewell.

And now, nothing remained but to dress the Earl in Mrs. Mill's clothes. No detail had been forgotten. A flaxen wig, the colour of Mrs. Mills's hair, had been provided; the Earl's dark eye-brows were painted a sandy yellow, rouge on his cheeks, and a kerchief bound tightly over his beard. Mrs. Mills had concealed her face. The dress was the same she had worn, and some of Lady Nithsdale's own petticoats were put on to hide the large, athletic limbs which were so unused to sweeping garments.

“We are ready now,” Lady Nithsdale said, “we are ready. Now, dear love, do not falter.”

Ah! what a moment it was as she led out the supposed Mrs. Mills, bewailing the delay of her waiting-maid, and saying in a loud voice,—

“Do, I pray you, find her quickly, and send her hither. I am almost distracted at her absence. I will come down stairs with you in the hopes of seeing her.”

The guards let, as they supposed, the two women pass, keeping such careless watch as not to notice that the Countess had brought two persons in, and passed three out.

As soon as they had passed the door to the stairs, Lady Nithsdale made the Earl walk before her, lest anything in his gait should arouse suspicion, praying him all the time to make haste and send her waiting-maid.

At the bottom of the flight of stairs Amy Evans stood, according to appointment, and then Lady Nithsdale turned, and mounting the stairs, she arrived, breathless and triumphant, at the Earl's room.

Empty now! But as she went in she began to lament the absence of her maid, and, with marvellous presence of mind, kept up a conversation as if the Earl were still there, imitating his voice and answering her own questions in it, and at last,

bidding him good-night, saying she must not delay another moment or it would be too late to obtain admission with the petition at St. James's, she said in a voice everyone within earshot could hear,—

“Keep a brave heart, my dear lord; I shall return at daybreak with good news, I am well assured.”

So she left the cell, failing in no precaution. She pulled through the string of the latch so that it could only be opened from within, and as she passed the servant in attendance she said,—

“Do not disturb my lord yet; he does not wish for candles. He desires to finish his meditations and prayers without interruption.”

If the ascent of those stairs had often been to her a very Gethsemane, the descent now was scarcely less painful. She trembled as she passed on. She fancied footsteps were hurrying behind her, yet dared not turn her head. Every sound made her heart beat so terribly that she could scarcely put one foot before the other. At last she reached the open air; it revived her, and seemed to give her courage. Almost fainting, she signalled to the coachman who was standing by to bring up his coach. She threw herself into it, and telling him to drive

to Mrs. Mills's house, she began to breathe more freely.

It was, then, true; her husband was free, and she had saved him. The excess of joy is ever akin to the excess of sorrow, and this brave woman, who had all that day never suffered herself to falter or give way to tears, now, with a cry of "Thank God, thank God!" burst into a fit of convulsive weeping which relieved her full heart.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SKY AFLAME.

ON that eventful evening when Mrs. Mills was recovering from what had been a terrible strain upon her, her son came hastily in.

"Where is Llewellyn?" he said. "The old man Michael Paston is dying, and he would fain see him."

"He went out with your father to see to—" Mrs. Mills paused.

"See to what?"

"A room near at hand where some person needs a lodging."

"Now, mother, how full of mystery you are. More folk than one want lodgings to-night, that they

may be within view of Tower Hill, and see the prisoners on their way in the cart to meet their fate. Poor fellows! I pity them. And what will the Countess here do? She will die of grief."

"Harry," his mother said, seizing him by the arm, "can you keep a secret? No, I dare not tell you—you will let that chatter-box Awdry into the secret—her tongue would wag faster than ever if she knew—if she knew."

"Would it, then? I tell you what, mother, I won't have Awdry lightly spoken of. She will soon be my wife and your daughter, so you had best take care what you say," and with that Harry bounced out of the room, and, going to the kitchen, demanded of his two little sisters where he could find David Llewellyn.

The children were sitting crouched over the fire; they knew something unusual was in the air, but the whole business had been so carefully managed that they were quite ignorant of what their mother had done. All they could tell their brother was that their mother had gone off in a coach with the Countess and Mistress Morgan, and that the Countess had come back with mother, but was gone again. Their mother was on the couch in the parlour, and bid

them run away for her head pained her, and she wanted to be quiet.

Harry Mills swore under his breath, and was so angry that his sisters were quite frightened.

David Llewellyn came in at that moment, and Harry Mills said,—

“Oh, here you are at last. I am sent to fetch you to see Michael Paston. He is dying, and I suppose he has relented. Anyhow, he wants your presence. Come along.”

“Are you sure you are delivering a right message?”

“Sure, man? Of course I am sure; but if you have cooled on Mistress Christian, please yourself and stay at home.”

“I must see your mother first,” he said.

“You had better not try to see her; she is as cross as two sticks, and, like as not, will bid you go about your business. I don’t know what ails her.”

David Llewellyn knew well enough, but he did not say more to Harry, and left it to Mr. Mills who came in at this minute to tell his wife the Earl was safely hidden in the garret he had procured for him, and that Lady Nithsdale, who had been with the Duchess of Montrose, would soon be with him, under Walter Elliot’s care.

As the two men walked in the direction of London Bridge, a strange, lurid light in the sky was attracting attention.

It seemed to grow more vivid every moment, and soon the heavens were aflame as with fire, and the crowds who were hastening towards Tower Hill to wait all night for the dawn of the day which was to see the rebel lords led out to die, were awe-struck and alarmed.

"God's final judgments are coming on the earth," said a man clad in Puritan garb. He had gained a flight of steps before one of the houses, and from this vantage ground was calling on the people to repent of their sins, for the wrath of God was written in the sky.

The adherents of the Jacobite cause saw, in the flaming pennons which seemed to wave across the overarching sky, the anger of the Almighty, which the King had provoked by turning a deaf ear to the women who had pleaded for their husbands' lives, and, in one instance, had treated a suppliant with brutal indifference.

"What does it mean?" Harry Mills said. "I don't like it, though I am no coward. Good Heavens! it looks as if London was to be burned up. I say, Llewellyn, I am scared."

"It is an Aurora," David said calmly, "seen often, I have read, in the regions of ice and snow. No doubt the severe frost is in some way the cause."

But when they reached London Bridge they found the panic had spread there.

Awdry came out of the house, followed by her mother; but where they were going they could not tell.

On catching sight of Harry Mills, Awdry rushed into his arms, and Mrs. Chenery asked him for the love of Heaven to protect them.

"Protect you from what?"

It was David's calm voice.

"My good woman, go into your house and be quiet, and do not give way to unnecessary fear."

"And old Michael Paston is dying," Mrs. Chenery almost screamed.

"And the poor creatures in the Tower waiting for death," said another.

"They do but get their deserts; but I pity them."

David waited to hear no more, for Jack Barnby touched his shoulder. He was trembling with fear, and said,—

"Make haste into the parlour, for the old man is dying."

David obeyed, and, passing through the shop, was met by old Nancy.

"He is going fast," she said. "Lord, Master Llewellyn, what a fearsome sight is this in the sky."

As David entered the parlour, Christian, who was kneeling by her father's chair, held out her hand to him.

"Come nearer," she said, "he wants to speak to you, and his breath fails."

The old man was propped up in his chair in front of the casement, his eyes fixed on the bastions of the Tower, which could be seen distinctly in the ruddy glow which wrapped it and all the churches and buildings on the river bank with a blood-red mantle.

The frozen river was deserted, no fires blazed there, the shows were closed, for the mass of the people was collected in the neighbourhood of Tower Hill to see a show which might well make their hearts sink within them; though, with the vulgar and morbid craving of those times, the more wealthy paid large sums to witness it, from roofs and windows, while their poorer neighbours would stand, jostled and often nearly fainting, in a crowd all night, rather than miss what was a spectacle of horror to haunt them for the rest of their lives.

"Who is it, Christian?" Michael's voice, sounding as if far away, said.

"It is David, father; you bid me send for him."

"Yes, yes. But look yonder, David Llewellyn. Are not those fiery heavens a sign of God's wrath against this nation? Noble men are condemned to die for a righteous cause; and ere another night falls they will have died a cruel death. See!" he said, raising his arm and pointing to the sky with his thin fingers. "See how a flaming sword hangs over the Tower! It is a message, a message—'Vengeance is mine! I will repay, saith the Lord.'"

But, after a pause, when the stillness was only broken by the old man's heavy breathing,—

"I cannot die and leave my only child alone uncared for. Take her, David Llewellyn, take her. Death teaches me that whither I go, with the spirits of yon brave men on the morrow, there will be peace from strife. I die a loyal subject of King James, but I die in the faith of Christ, and I hear His voice:—'Forgive, as ye would be forgiven.' Take my child, David, for she says she loves none but you; and you will find papers, all signed and sealed, leaving her all my worldly possessions. I can say no more—no more."

And David, kneeling by Christian's side, his arm supporting her, held the hand of the old man in his warm, strong clasp, as he said,—

"God helping me, sir, I will cherish this treasure you have given me till death parts us. But do not mistake me," he added—even in this supreme moment honest and true to his convictions—"do not mistake me. I have not changed my opinions; yet I can rejoice to tell you that from yonder Tower *one* prisoner has escaped by the extraordinary courage of his noble wife. Lord Nithsdale is safe, and will, ere another sun sets, be on his way to the coast, and beyond the reach of his enemies."

A gleam of pleasure illuminated Michael Paston's face for a moment as he murmured,—

"God be thanked."

The shadows of death gathered over his fine countenance, and after a night of watching and words of prayer, which fell from Christian's lips, his spirit departed in peace as the grey dawn of the February day broke in the east, and the fiery pennons of the great Aurora had vanished like a dream.

When, guided by Amy Evans, Lady Nithsdale had climbed the broken stairs of the garret where the Earl was concealed, in a humble house not far from the Tower, she fell in a deep swoon into her husband's arms.

The frightful efforts she had made to effect her

purpose during the last few days, and the agony of suspense that she had endured till she knew her husband was safe, had at last conquered her gallant spirit.

When Amy had restored her to consciousness, she left her sobbing like a tired child in Lord Nithsdale's arms, as he soothed and comforted her with many loving, tender words.

The scarlet glow of the Aurora found its way into the room by the little dormer window in the roof, and the voices of the people and their hurrying footsteps below made the watchers in their narrow garret think a fire was raging.

Neither the Earl nor his wife slept that night. There was still the dread of discovery, and every sound in the house below made Lady Nithsdale start and listen, fearing that some cruel messengers might be coming to arrest the escaped prisoner and carry him off to the scaffold.

As the dawn broke, and as the light of morning strengthened, the square of azure sky, seen through the little window, was like a sapphire set in a rough wooden frame.

The Earl raised his eyes to it and said,—

“Ah, Winifrede! Winifrede! I had looked forward to this sunrise as the last I should ever see;

but, alas! alas! my best friends are even now being led out to die. I cannot bear to think of brave young Derwentwater laying his head upon the block. It is too sad, too terrible. And hearken!"

Lady Nithsdale started up as the sonorous toll of a bell was heard.

"What is it?" she said. "What does it mean?"

"It means," the Earl said, "that these noble men are on their way to death. I should have been with them but for you, my sweet wife. But I feel almost as if I were a coward, and had deserted my friends in the hour of departure.

"Nay, do not speak thus. Remember our children. Remember what my few remaining days would have been without you; for I should have died and left the children orphans. I *could* not have lived without you."

"Again!" the Earl said, as the big bell tolled at intervals, its solemn voice sounding like a call to another world.

At last the bell ceased. There was a long pause.

"What does the silence mean?" Lady Nithsdale whispered, as she clung to her husband, clasping her arms tightly round him, as if afraid he might yet be taken from her. "What does the silence mean?"

The Earl knew only too well. The work of death

was going on, and the friends with whom he had fought side by side—ah! and with whom he had held sweet converse in happier times—were even then going through the dark valley of death by the hand of the executioner.

Once more the bell sounded—it seemed to the listeners, with a louder voice from its iron, merciless tongue.

Once more! The Earl started to his feet.

“It is over—it is all over, and I am here,” he said, pacing the room with hasty strides. “Oh, Winifrede! What right have I to be here? I should have died with them; I should not have heeded your entreaties. I reproach myself—yes, I should have died with them.”

“Oh, William! my dearest love, do not speak thus and break my heart. I pray you to be quiet, for Amy bid me remember that, if any strange noises were heard by the people below, suspicion would be aroused. I beseech you be prudent. Think what it will be if we are discovered, and all I have done is in vain.”

This seemed to touch the Earl.

“Yes,” he said; “forgive me, Winifrede, if I seem unmindful and ungrateful. I know what you have borne for my sake, but the thought of Derwentwater,

my dearest friend, leaving me thus is too terrible. I never saw him after that day of our condemnation—we parted at the Second Gateway of the Tower. In the coach on our way from Westminster, he said he regretted he had pleaded guilty, for, he said, ‘I have not committed treason. All those people in the hall were traitors; not you and me.’ He said, ‘If one of us survives the other, let the survivor hold the dead in constant remembrance, and be consoled by the thought that his friend died for the cause of right and justice.’ Now, I am the survivor, and Derwentwater, above all the rest, shall live in my heart till death.”

The hours that followed were long and anxious ones, and it seemed as if Amy Evans and Mrs. Mills would never come, as it had been agreed they should.

At last when Amy came, she looked so pale and distressed that her mistress thought she bore ill news.

It was not so, but she had been with Mr. Mills, who had with his son seen the sentence of death executed on Lord Derwentwater and Lord Kenmure, and as Amy had struggled through the dense crowd, she had caught sight of the scaffold and the block,

which had so terribly agitated her that she could scarcely speak at first.

The Earl questioned her as to any details she had heard from Mr. Mills, especially about Lord Derwentwater.

But with ready tact, as soon as she had recovered herself, she began to tell Lady Nithsdale that, through the good offices of Mr. Mills, it was hoped that the Venetian Ambassador's servant, by name Michel, would convey the Earl to Dover in the livery of his master, as the Ambassador's coach was to be sent to meet his Excellency's brother, who was expected to land on the following Sunday.

"Another scheme for my safety," the Earl said, sighing heavily. "Another scheme for me—and my friends had none to help them to escape!"

He threw himself on the rude couch which was the only furniture in the room, and sighed out, "I ought to have died with them!"

"Nay," Lady Nithsdale said, regaining her usual calm manner. "Nay, my dear lord, life is a precious gift of God, and we do well to use every effort to save it."

"Not by ignoble means—by an escape in woman's clothes, by flight in a lacquey's livery!"

Then, seeing a spasm of pain passing over his wife's face, he said,—

“Forgive me, dear heart, forgive me; but I am sore troubled and broken down with sorrow for my friends. Tell me, Evans, how did they meet death? What you know, tell me.”

“Dear master,” Amy said, “why should you suffer the pain of hearing details of those dreadful events? I can but tell you that my Lord Derwentwater died as he had lived—a brave, honourable gentleman. It was but a short if sharp passage to heaven. Mr. Mills says there could have been but a moment's suffering. One blow of the axe sufficed. The bitterness of death was passed when he had bid Lady Derwentwater farewell last evening—I believe the Earl said as much. He spoke to the people from the rail of the scaffold in a clear voice, clear as a bell. He said he hoped none of his friends would misunderstand his pleading guilty—he was told it was a matter of form—and by so doing, he only submitted himself to the King's mercy.”

“Yes, yes, that is what we were all told,” the Earl said. “And Lord Kenmure, did he say as much?”

“He did not speak to the people, but he prayed for King James, and said, he had not thought of

dying so soon, or he would have got ready a black suit. But though Mr. Mills said he showed great resolution, and carried himself with firmness, his face did not wear the lofty calm of Lord Derwentwater's, who, as the sunbeams shone on his fair hair and noble features, looked, so Mr. Mills said, as Saint Stephen might have looked when stoned and done to death by a wicked crowd. There were many weeping for him, and as he laid down his head on the block, there was a great moaning running through the throng, and many voices cried, 'God bless him!'"

It was a part of Lady Nithsdale heroic nature to rise in the face of difficulty, and meet it with gallant determination. All her resolution was needed during the next two days, when the Earl's courage seemed to give way, and he mourned for his friends, declaring he ought to have died with them.

Mrs. Mills, who came with wine and bread hidden under her cloak, full of the good news that all was arranged for the departure of the Earl in the carriage of the Venetian Ambassador, was not a little disappointed to see in what a melancholy fashion Lord Nithsdale received the tidings that once more his

escape had been arranged for him, and he had only to pay attention to the directions given him.

He could scarcely thank the good woman who had served him with absolute devotion, and repented that he had by an ignoble flight shunned the death which his friends had met with noble courage.

So while Lady Nithsdale's heart was torn with the thought of parting from her husband, uncertain whether he might yet be discovered and again taken prisoner, she assumed an air of cheerfulness, and did her utmost to assure Mrs. Mills of their gratitude to her for all she had done, and begged her to be sure that the Earl would ever be ready to serve her and her children in happier times.

These few hours preceding the Earl's departure, passed in the wretched garret, striving to cheer or divert his attention from his position, in bitter cold and gloom, were amongst the most terrible that Lady Nithsdale had passed.

But she kept up her spirit for her husband's sake, prayed with him and spoke of future days when they should meet in another country, and be free and happy. She talked of the children and wondered if little Will was grown out of knowledge, and whether Nan had learned to speak French so well that she had forgotten her own tongue.

Thus did this noble woman fulfil her mission, and when the moment of parting came she would not falter.

The Earl was the most overcome, and turned back again and again to fold his wife to his heart before he finally followed Amy and faithful Mrs. Mills from the room.

Lady Nithsdale stood where he had left her, smiling through her tears, till he was really gone.

She listened to the footsteps on the creaking stairs till they had passed into silence. Then and not till then did her courage utterly fail, and she threw herself on the wretched bed where, two hours after, Amy found her scarcely conscious of anything, and too thoroughly exhausted to speak.

CHAPTER XVII.

CALM AFTER STORM.

AMY EVANS lost no time in getting her mistress away from the little garret where so many sad and anxious hours had been passed.

She made her drink the wine that was left, and encouraged her to make the necessary effort for departure.

“An honest man in Drury Lane, my dear lady, will receive us. You will have better accommodation there, and he is vowed to secrecy. He is a staunch Jacobite, but he lies low, as indeed all the loyal subjects of King James must needs do; but none can rejoice more than Master Brooks that the Earl is safe.”

“But is he safe, Amy? I shall have no peace of mind till I know the sea lies between him and his enemies.”

“My Lord will start on Wednesday in his Excellency’s coach-and-six. Monsieur Michel has no fears, and the livery and badge of his master will be a safe pass. Monsieur Michel will hire a small boat at Dover under pretence of sending two of his Excellency’s servants to Calais on an errand for him—the whole is perfectly arranged. Fear not, my dear lady.”

Lady Nithsdale tried to rouse herself, but she was worn out in mind and body, with all she had gone through, and on reaching the house in Drury Lane she was put to bed by Amy and fell into a long sleep, from which it was difficult to rouse her to take any nourishment.

So she lay, watched over by her faithful friend who had served her with such devotion for four days.

When the news came that the Earl was really safe, Lady Nithsdale again set herself to consider what course she ought to pursue.

Now that the immediate anxiety for her husband was over, she thought of Terreagles and the family documents she had buried there before starting on her long journey to London.

"For my children's sake," she said to Amy, "I must gain possession of these papers. I must return to Terreagles and recover them from their grave."

But this plan received no encouragement from the Duchess of Montrose, who, wrapped in a long cloak and her face concealed by a hood, answered in person Lady Nithsdale's letter, entreating her to get permission for her to depart freely upon her business to Scotland.

The Duchess had entirely failed in gaining the desired permission; and looking at the pale and worn face raised to hers, and seeing the marks which her late heroic efforts for her husband had left upon it, she said,—

"Dear Winifrede, relinquish the idea. The Government utterly declines to give you a free pass; much indignation is roused against you in high quarters, and it seems to me that, in your present condition, another long journey will kill you."

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"I must undertake it, nevertheless, dear cousin. I cannot allow my children to suffer through my cowardice."

"Cowardice! Winifrede, you are only too brave. Give up the notion, I pray you; bide your time here, watch your opportunity, and then, when this occurs, you can cross the sea, and join the husband whose life you saved. Do not be rash, Winifrede, or who may tell what may be the consequences?"

The Duchess felt as she spoke that it would be useless to try and change Lady Nithsdale's determination. Kisses and persuasions were alike in vain.

"I must go to Terreagles," she said, "for my children's sake."

"Always for someone's sake; never for your own," the Duchess said impatiently. "It will not be for your children's advantage if you are taken prisoner and debarred from ever seeing husband or children again."

"I think," Lady Nithsdale said, "dear cousin, that God, who has furthered my designs so far, will continue to do so. I am not afraid."

"No, you are never afraid. I know that full well; but oh, Winifrede, all this trouble has changed you sadly. You look far more fitted for your bed

than a long, wearisome journey to Scotland. Give up the idea, I pray you."

But Lady Nithsdale was resolute, and the Duchess left her, sad at heart, and marvelling at the courage that fragile, gentle woman possessed.

As indeed we, who look back on this heroic wife and mother, who answers in her own person the description of a modern poet, as made "of spirit, fire and dew," must also marvel.

It is the old, old story which has been rehearsed by noble men and women for centuries. That old story, which can never lose its power nor its freshness—the story of sacrifice for Love's sake, when the weak are made strong, and the rough places smooth, as they go steadfastly onward toward the accomplishment of their desire for the sake of one whom they will serve, even unto death.

All that Lady Nithsdale's friends could obtain for her was a decision that came through the Solicitor-General, that if Lady Nithsdale showed proper respect to the Government, and never appeared in public either in England or Scotland, no search would be made for her; but if she neglected to observe this order, she would be instantly put under arrest.

It seems strange, but it is true that the par-

ticulars of the Earl of Nithsdale's escape from the Tower were not known. Nor was there any certainty as to who had really been the accessories to the fact. For so admirably had Lady Nithsdale laid her scheme by introducing two women, and skilfully changing their dresses to hoodwink the guards, that it was difficult, if not impossible, to fix upon the real conspirators.

It has been thought that the escape was connived at, and that the guards were purposely unobservant of who came in or who went out of the Earl's cell. But there is really no solid ground for believing this, and at this distance of time it is impossible to decide the question.

Lady Nithsdale was once more full of energy, and surprised Amy by the eagerness with which she set about preparations for her departure to Scotland.

She entered into every detail herself, and Walter Elliot could only do her bidding.

"It is a very different start from the last, good Walter. The weather is bright and warm; there is spring everywhere—and spring in my heart. Last time we journeyed together it was winter, and my heart was frost-bound in misery and woe."

Lady Nithsdale saw Mrs. Mills and Mrs. Morgan several times, her two good friends without whose

aid she could never have carried through her purpose.

She was anxious to do something which would show her gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Mills. With all her own troubles pressing on her, Lady Nithsdale had interested herself in Awdry Chenery.

She had felt sorry for the girl's passionate grief when her lover had been put under arrest for brawling on the ice and proclaiming his Jacobite principles.

"Harry can never hold his tongue," his poor mother said. "I never know what may happen about him. I hoped this love for Awdry would sober him a bit, but I don't see it."

"You feel kindly to Awdry, Mrs. Mills, don't you?"

"Oh! my lady, she is a winning, coaxing little puss, and I never can help loving her; but she isn't the wife for Harry. If it had been Christian Paston, now, I'd have thanked God; but David Llewellyn has won her, and they are well matched. He is a good young man, a bit too grave, but we can't expect perfectness in anyone. The old man, Michael Paston was a wonderfully strong Jacobite, and, as you may know, David Llewellyn is all for the present Government. Christian's father, when he heard this, months ago, forbade him the house, but relented

when he came to die. There's always a change when death comes; few folks die with malice in their hearts, and Michael Paston repented of his harshness to his daughter's lover, and sent for him, that night he died, and bid him take Christian for better and for worse. And he has left her all he possessed in the world, and a pretty business, so David is provided for, and I am glad of it, for I knew and loved his mother, poor soul! I only hope they'll forget their differences, for Christian is a thorough-going Jacobite."

"Oh! Mrs. Mills," Lady Nithsdale exclaimed, "now that my dear lord is safe, I feel as if all differences must be buried, and, as much as may be, forgotten. Is your son Harry bent on going to sea again? Think you, would he settle as a landsman?"

"He is talking of it, my lady, for Awdry vows she won't marry him if he is off to sea again. He says he had a mind to put up the banns at Saint Mary Overie last Sunday, but Awdry hangs back. The truth is she is a little flighty thing, and likes to play with her lovers as if they were fish on a hook."

"If I can be assured of your son's good conduct, I will try to get him a place by Mr. Morgan's interest, and while he is on his trial for good behaviour, Awdry might be under the care, as waiting-

maid, of some good lady. If I only were returning to Terreagles as the mistress, I would take Awdry with me in the capacity of under waiting-woman to my dear Evans."

"An excellent thing it would be for her, my lady, for her mother just goes the way to ruin her; dresses her up as fine as a peacock, and lets her run about where she lists. If it had not been for Christian Paston, things might have been worse. Poor thing! she is very much cast down, for she has been always with her father, reading to him and learning foreign tongues to please him. She is beautiful to look at, my lady. I wish you could see her. There is something about her which my husband says reminds him of your ladyship. You will not take offence."

Lady Nithsdale laughed. The first time Mrs. Mills had ever heard that sound from her lips.

"Why offence, dear Mrs. Mills?" she asked.

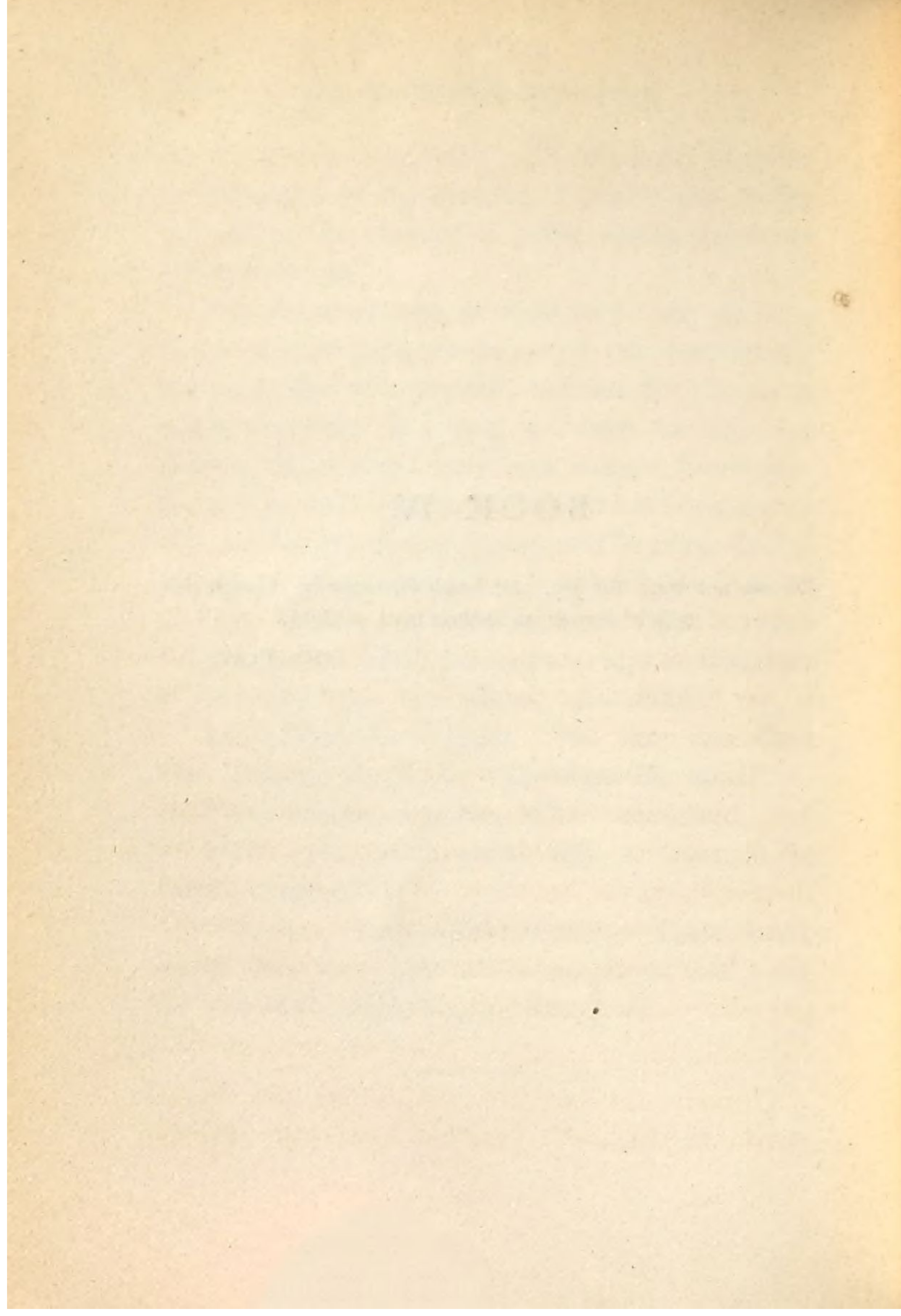
"Well, you are a grand lady, a Countess, a Duke's daughter."

"Ah, stop," Lady Nithsdale said. "These sound empty titles now. *My* title to honour is that I am the wife of the noble Earl of Nithsdale."

BOOK IV.

Do we not weep for joy, and laugh for anguish, a laugh that
tells of sorrow more than tears or sighs.

OLD PLAY.



BOOK IV.

CHAPTER XVIII.

REST AT LAST.

It was with a light heart and determination to carry out her purpose that Lady Nithsdale set out on her journey to Scotland. Everything conspired to make it easy for her.

The weather was delightful; the winter—the long, cruel winter—was over and gone, and the time of the singing of birds was come. Flowers were peeping up in the hedgerows, and a veil of emerald green was thrown over the outline of the trees—over those bare boughs, which, when Lady Nithsdale last passed along this road, were but

“Bare, ruined choirs where once the sweet birds sang.”

If there was danger in her journey, the danger was for herself, and on the last occasion the fear of

death made her afraid for the one she loved best in all the world. Now she had saved his life, and her manner was gay and jocose as she rode along with her faithful attendants, breaking out now and again into snatches of song with Amy Evans, who had a sweet voice, and sang the old Welsh ballads, which brought back their youthful days to both mistress and maid. For Amy's mother, Rachel Evans, had been the long-tried friend of the Duchess of Powis, and was sent to bring Lady Winifrede Herbert from the convent in Belgium to her Welsh home.

Lady Nithsdale ventured to stay for two nights at Lord Traquair's castle, and it was delightful for her to pour out the story of the past few weeks to her sister and brother-in-law, who had gone through terrible anxiety on her account.

Nor was this anxiety at an end. By Lord Traquair's advice, Lady Nithsdale gave no notice of her appearance at Terreagles, but she sent round to tell her neighbours and friends that she should like to see them, as, by leave of the Government, she had returned to her old home to arrange for her final departure.

No such leave had been given, but she trusted to the old friendship of the Lord Lieutenant of the county

to give her due notice if it was likely a search would be made.

The papers, so important for her children's sake, had been, as we know, buried under a tree, in the bitter cold of a winter's evening. With the assistance of her old gardener Hugh, she went, in the stillness of a spring night, to unearth them.

The stars were looking down from the dark blue sky overhead, and no sound was heard but the whisper of the gentle breeze as it swept over the moors and hills, and the soft murmur of the river Nith, as it flowed gently along its course to the sea.

When she had concealed the case containing the precious papers under her cloak, she returned to the castle, thanking God that this last service for those she loved had been successfully performed.

"Oh, Amy, Amy!" she said, "God has been very good to me. Now, why do you look so grave?"

"Dear lady, I have been told by a man on the estate that he heard one of the Government Lords say that he should come hither to-morrow and insist on seeing the order that the Countess of Nithsdale pretended to have from the Government."

"Is it so, Amy? Then we must once more take to the road. Summon Walter Elliot into the hall,

and all my trusty servants, and let me bid them farewell."

It was done as she wished, and in silence and sadness the people came to hear her parting words.

Lady Nithsdale had never, in Amy's eyes, looked so lovely as, standing on the raised dais at the further end of the hall, a lamp above her shedding its radiance on her fair head, she said, in a clear, musical voice,—

"I leave you all with my blessing. I go to join my lord and our children in a foreign land, but our hearts will ever cling to this dear country, and it may be, in happier times, the son of a Maxwell may be restored to the inheritance of his fathers, and that Terreagles Castle, now so desolate, may echo with the sound of children's footsteps and happy voices; but for myself and for my dear lord, we shall return hither no more. May Heaven bless you all, my good and leal friends, and so I bid you a long farewell."

A murmur of "God bless your ladyship and the Earl!" ran through the little assembly, and many were choked with tears as, slowly and sadly, they left the hall.

At early dawn the Countess and her faithful band of followers started once more on her way to

the South—and not an hour too soon, for messengers arrived at Terreagles from Dumfries before the sun was high in the heavens, and the castle was again searched and then taken possession of by the Government official.

With the precious documents safe in her keeping, Lady Nithsdale rode away from the place so dear to her, with mingled feelings of sorrow and thankfulness—sorrow that never would she look upon it again, and that the happy home of her young married life, the birthplace of her children, would know her no more. But there was thankfulness that she had accomplished her mission, and that now, within a very few weeks, she might hope to place the valuable documents in her husband's hands, and then, with him and with her children, all the labour and anxiety and alternations of hope and fear, which she had gone through for many long months, would be but as dust in the balance when weighed against the joy of reunion, and deliverance of her husband from the gates of death.

When Lady Nithsdale arrived in London, she learned from the Duchess of Montrose and Mrs. Morgan that the King was furious with her for daring to make her appearance in Scotland.

The good Duchess, at the risk of incurring the

Duke's displeasure, insisted on visiting her by stealth, and, after this, Lady Nithsdale went to bid her adieu.

"Success," she said, gaily, "dear Evans, has made me brave, and I must bid my dear kinswoman farewell."

The Duchess did not hide from her that her position was really very serious.

"The King has granted Lady Kenmure money for the education of her children, and Lady Nairne has, by some means, found favour; but His Majesty swears you have given him more trouble, Winifrede, than any other woman in Europe."

"He will never forget my hanging on his coat tails," Lady Nithsdale said, laughing. "I know he has hated me from that moment; but what do I care?"

"That may be true," the Duchess said; "but the fact remains that, while many of the other prisoners who have escaped were not strictly guarded, the warders who had charge of the Earl are like to be severely punished for neglect of duty."

"That is shameful," Lady Nithsdale said. "They did not neglect their duty; it was I who outwitted them."

"Ah! Winifrede, but at what a risk! I shudder

now when I think of that awful moment in the Tower when you left the cell empty, and went along those long passages and down those stone stairs with your husband, disguised, before you! But, dear Winifred, do not delay another day, pray get to the coast as soon as possible."

"Yes, to-morrow." Then, with a little tired sigh, "I feel like that dove which went out from the Ark, in the old Bible story, and had found no rest for her feet while the stormy waters swelled. But she found it at last," she added, "and so shall I. Once in my husband's arms, and it will be rest—rest, blessed rest!"

She found the rest that she hoped for. Her journey was performed in safety, and at Paris this devoted wife and noble-hearted mother, who had gone through unexampled dangers for the sake of those dearer to her than life, was rewarded by meeting her husband and children in safety.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE END OF THE STORY.

1717.—It was a bright September afternoon, when everything was wrapped in a golden calm.

An afternoon unlike that when, three years before that time, Christian had looked from her window on the broad surface of the Thames, ruffled with a strong south-easterly wind making little eddies against the piers of the bridge, when a small boat, rowed by an unskilled oarsman, had upset, and was carried away by the stream. Now the sails of the boats flapped idly in the air, and scarcely a breeze stirred the pennons on one of the state barges on its way to Greenwich.

The rowers of smaller craft plied their oars lustily; their voices as they sang snatches of songs coming in at the open casement, where Christian sat with her baby on her knee. The child was sleeping the profound slumber of healthful infancy, and from time to time Christian looked down upon

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his face and smoothed the fair curls from his forehead.

Presently she turned her head as the door of the parlour opened, and with a bright smile of welcome she raised her hand, as if to bid him take care not to wake little Michael. David came quietly towards his wife, and speaking in a low voice said,—

“He is a better subject for contemplation than a book, dear heart. I remember how often I have seen you seated here, with a heavy volume on your knees, and your father in yonder chair.”

“Yes,” Christian said with a gentle sigh, “yes,” the chair is empty now. Draw it closer and occupy it, David, we can talk at our ease, for business is slack to-day! Poor father!” she said, “poor father! he went at the right time; he could ill have borne to see how, year by year, the new King seems more firmly seated on his throne.”

“And we may be thankful that this is so; it seems to me that peace and prosperity are better than warfare and confusion.”

Christian put her hand gently in her husband’s.

“We will not venture on debatable ground, dear David; we agree in so many things.”

“Yes,” he said, “dear heart, we agree to differ.”

“But, David, I cannot forget that time of bitter

woe when from yonder Tower these brave men were led out to die. Why should we forget them? I hope and pray our boy may never see the like."

"There is no use in forecasting," David said, "but I hear it said that the Jacobites are quiet but not crushed."

"Oh! no more bloodshed, no more breaking hearts, God grant it. David, I wish I could forget. You are different—all men can forget, women cannot."

"Now, I call that a sweeping assertion; as it happens, I have been remembering, not forgetting, the past this very day. I was in the basement looking over the contents of an old chest which had not been opened for years, and I went to the parapet to throw some bits of useless lumber into the river, when lo! the present vanished, and I saw, as in a vision, a man fighting with a strong current, and an angel above him with outstretched hands, calling upon him to be of good courage, and as I stood looking down into the river so calm to-day, for there is not a ripple on its surface, I thanked God. Have I not need?"

"And I have need too," she said, as she laid her head upon her husband's shoulder, and then both were silent for a moment—a moment of supreme

content, when words can never be spoken. Such moments come to us all in our lives—do we prize them as we ought, or only know them when they are passed from us for ever? We read so little of this pure and unquestioning love in those days—some would even tell us that it is useless to speak or write of it—the day for it is passed and over. Sentimental love is of a fashion gone by, and men and women are more sensible, and take a more practical view of life. Yet, let us believe there are yet happy homes amongst the rich and noble, as well as amongst the middle class and the poor, where the sun of love shines brightly, and if clouds darken the sky for a time, as in every home they surely will darken it, faith can see on those very clouds the rainbow of hope, which tells that if all else fails, love will endure.

“I came to tell you,” David said, “that Mrs. Mills is on her way hither. At this moment she is at Mistress Chenery’s. She stepped into the shop half-an-hour ago and bid me give you notice of her approach.”

“Is there more trouble about Harry and Awdry?”

“No, I think not; nothing new. The good woman looked happy, and said she had much to tell you.

She has had a messenger from abroad bringing news of the Countess of Nithsdale."

"That is good hearing," Christian said. "We must bid her to sup with us. As soon as Michael wakes I must see Nancy and find out what we can spread on the board to show our welcome. Mrs. Mills has been a good friend to us."

Little Michael now opened his blue eyes, and stretched out his arms to his father.

"Take him, David," Christian said, "while I go and find what is in my larder. Nancy is getting old, and needs more attention than in former times."

There was no need to fear that Christian's board should not be well spread. She was an excellent housewife, though Mistress Chenery was always ready to send a shaft from her quiver at learned women, who ought never to have chick or child, or husband either, for that matter. No one could do two things at once. Had not she found her shop enough work for her, and one girl enough to drive her wild with her wilful ways? The time would come when Mistress Llewellyn would find out her mistake, superior as she thought herself!

It was somewhat disappointing to Mistress Chenery to see everything so well ordered at the sign of "The Looking-Glass," and to hear on all

sides that it was the happiest household on the bridge.

Mrs. Mills came as she had promised, and Christian was ready to receive her, the baby asleep in his cradle, and a dainty repast spread out.

"Ah, my dear," Mrs. Mills said, "I could not rest till I had told you of my letter and remembrance from my dear lady. I knew she would never forget me, but I little thought I should have such a gift as this," and Mrs. Mills drew from her capacious pocket a leather case, and, opening it, displayed a beautiful necklace of chased gold, with a pendant attached.

"Read what is written on it, Christian, and then you shall take the letter, which was enclosed in the bag, and read it to me. I cried over it when Mistress Morgan brought it to me, and she has had a gift also."

"It is beautiful," Christian said; "you may well be proud of it, and turning the gold pendant, she saw engraved there,—

"For my good friend, Anne Mills, in memory of Winifrede Lady Nithsdale's ever grateful heart."

"To think of it," Mrs. Mills said: "it is too much

for my lady to say. I have thanked God, many a time since that I did not give way to my fears, though I shall never forget how my heart thumped at my side and I could scarce draw a breath when I went down those dark stairs in the Tower. Now read the letter. I am but a poor scholar. I am not like you, Christian; but I shall get that letter by heart, and say it over and over to myself," And Christian read,—

"To my dear Mrs. Mills, Tower Square, London, —Having a chance of sending by a trusty hand a box to my dear, kind Mrs. Morgan, I have asked her to convey to you this little offering of gratitude, viz., a chain of wrought gold, which was presented to me at Avignon by my lord, the Duke of Ormond. I have not much liking now for ornaments, nor heart to wear them, and my little Anne has enough and to spare, supplied by her aunt, who was, as you know, rich. Thus I have had the pendant on the chain inscribed with your name and mine in memory of that day—that never-to-be-forgotten day, now two years and six months past, when you rendered me that service. I am now with my dear lord and our children, and our faithful servants, Elliot and dear

Evans, at Rome, where we live in the fulness of peaceful joy at our reunion.

"We could not long remain at Avignon. There were strifes and contentions there that ill suited our mood, though I am bound to say benefits were showered on us by the poor King, who has lost heart, and no wonder, and will, so I think, make no further attempt to regain his throne.

"Dear Mrs. Mills, that day when I was clasped to my husband's breast at Paris, and my boy and girl clung to my gown weeping for joy, I sent up a prayer to God for you and yours, and daily I pray that His good angels, who were with us on that February night, and helped us to perform the work we had in hand, may be ever near you, your good husband and your children, minister to you in life and be with you in death. So prays your grateful friend,

WINIFREDE NITHSDALE."

The letter was dated in the preceding July, from Rome, but no more particular address was given.

"Yes," Christian said, "it is a beautiful letter, and I am glad for you."

"I knew you would be," Mrs. Mills said. "I

could not let Mistress Chenery see it. I just told her of it, and she said,—

“‘Then you’ll be mighty proud, no doubt, and harder than ever on my poor girl.’

“She is enough to provoke a saint. I am not hard on the poor, silly thing, though I don’t say but what I find it a burden to have her to nurse and look after, with the child, and she never so much as throwing me a word of thanks.”

“How does Awdry fare?” Christian asked. “I am coming to see her on Sunday, when David is free to leave the shop.”

“Oh! she is as weak as a fly, and as wilful and wayward as she can be, and the child squalls half the night. I say her mother, who spoiled her, ought to take some of the burden off my shoulders, though she would be more hindrance than help.”

“Have you heard more of Harry?”

“No; his ship is due next month. I hope he will bring home a bag of money, though I dare say he will spend it all on buying Awdry and the child some finery before he has been ashore a week. He is always loving and good to me,” said the fond mother, who never allowed anyone but herself to complain of Harry, “but I wish he had married a

wife like you, Christian; you would have been the making of him."

Christian laughed. She had no regrets at not being chosen to be the making of Harry Mills, a very hopeless piece of work for anyone to undertake, she thought, though confessing Awdry was the most incompetent person for the purpose that could well have been found.

"What do you hear of Jack Barnby?" Mrs. Mills said presently.

"He is getting good wages at 'The Three Bibles,' Christian said, "and no wonder, he was very clever with figures. David keeps the books himself now, and we shall not take another apprentice yet, though several have applied."

"It is good to see you so happy, Christian," Mrs. Mills said. "You look ten years younger than you did. David is a lucky man. He did not come from Shropshire and get that ducking in the Thames for nothing, as I have told him scores of times."

The great thoroughfare of London Bridge was quiet by ten o'clock on that September night.

A gentle breeze had sprung up and the signs made their presence known overhead as David

Llewellyn and his wife returned from accompanying Mrs. Mills to her house in Tower Square.

Above, the stars shone with more than ordinary radiance in the clear blue sky of the September night, and the planet Venus, now at her brightest, made a shimmer of light in the calm bosom of the river as she was reflected there. The gloomy bastions of the Tower, clearly seen, rose out of the clear atmosphere, and steeples and church towers could also be discerned rising from the mass of undefined buildings on the banks of the Thames.

Old London Bridge, along which the happy husband and wife passed to their own door, has vanished. The great houses and the people who inhabited them have alike gone, and their places know them no more.

But few of the busy crowds which now throng the new London Bridge give a thought to the old, nor care to conjure up a vision of it as it stood when David and Christian Llewellyn lived and loved under the sign of "The Looking-Glass." The old order changes, giving place to new.

The face of the world is altered, indeed, since the days when the Jacobite rising of 1715 filled many hearts with apprehension.

The London of to-day bears but little resem-

blance to the London of two centuries ago. But the stars look down—the unchanged emblems of an infinite and ever-watchful love which, amidst all the chances of this mortal life, we may believe rules the world.

THE END.

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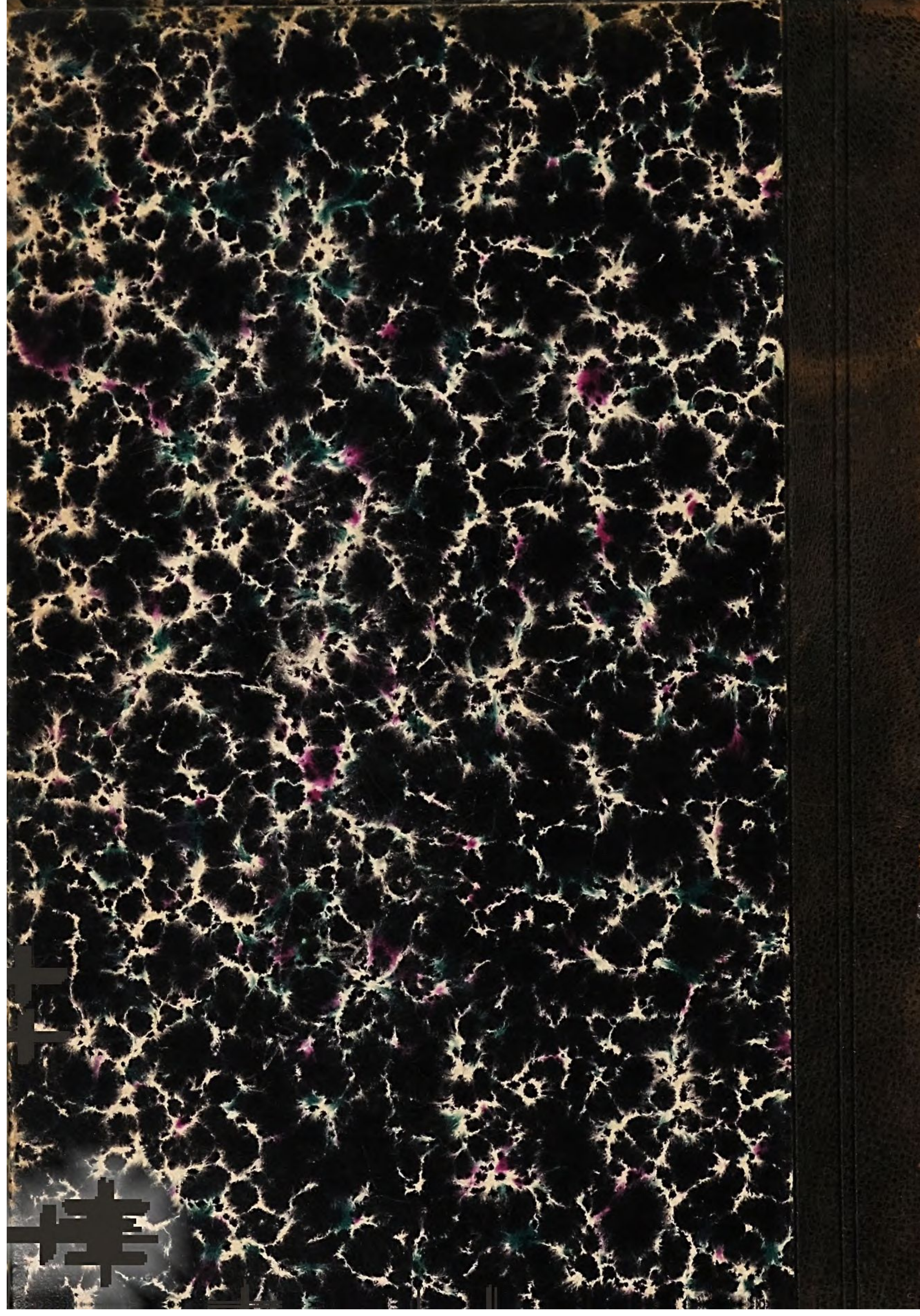
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MÜNCHEN
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Marshall, Emma

An escape from the tower a story of the Jacobite rising of 1715

Bd.: 24.

Leipzig 1896

P.o.angl. 219 f-24

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11817516-5